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ABSTRACT

This report, in six chapters, discusses various aspects of mentoring teachers. The first chapter, an introduction by Diane T. Pan and Sue E. Mutchler, reviews the history of teacher mentoring in Texas since 1988 and describes the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory's (SEDL) Teacher Mentoring Research Project. Chapter 2, "Lessons from Research on Teacher Mentoring: Review of the Literature," by Sue E. Mutchler, grounds SEDL's research in current understandings of teacher mentoring. Chapter 3, "Teacher Mentoring Survey of Texas School Districts: Summary of Results," by Diane T. Pan, presents findings and analysis of the statewide survey. Quantitative analysis of administrative data from three case sites are given in chapter 4, "Mentoring Beginning Teachers: The Implications of Contextual Conditions," by Kelly S. Shapley and Joan Bush. Chapter 5, "Lessons from the Field: Case Studies of Three Districts," by Robert W. Glover and Sue E. Mutchler, gives a report and analysis of findings from qualitative research done at three case sites. Conclusions, implications, and recommendations that draw from findings of all study data sources are presented in the final chapter of this report. Appendices consist of the statewide survey instrument and an annotated bibliography of additional resources on mentoring. (Contains 44 references.) (RT)

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Mentoring Beginning Teachers: Lessons from the Experience in Texas

Policy Research Report

November 2000

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701
512-476-6861
www.sedl.org

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Chapter One

Introduction

Diane T. Pan

Sue E. Mutchler

The needs of beginning teachers have been brought to the forefront of state and national policy due to increasing concerns about teacher quality and teacher shortage problems. As long ago as 1988, researchers at the national level were declaring the urgency of problems in the teacher pipeline, citing a "proliferation of policy activity in states and localities to address the perceived problems of teacher supply and quality" (Haggstrom, Darling-Hammond, and Grissmer, 1988, p. 1). A decade later, teacher supply and quality remain a serious problem, with schools experiencing "continuing high rates of attrition for beginning teachers, more than 30 percent of whom leave within the first five years of teaching" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1997, p. 21).

Research and reporting by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) over the last decade has led to an understanding that quality teaching is critical to student success and "what teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. iv). The commission's 1996 report called for a number of strategies for supporting beginning teachers, including effective induction through teacher mentoring. Demands on what teachers must know and do have increased due to factors such as increasingly diverse student populations and pressures of accountability systems, making first-year induction programs critical for the success of beginning teachers. According to research evidence, "traditional sink-or-swim induction contributes to high attrition and to lower levels of teacher effectiveness" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, p. 40).

In the last two decades, more states have begun supporting induction programs that provide mentoring for beginning teachers. NCTAF's school and staffing survey of 1993-94 reported that among teachers with less than 5 years of experience, 55 percent experienced some kind of formal induction program during their first year of teaching. Only 16 percent of teachers with more than 10 years of experience received first-year support. In Southwest Educational Development Laboratory's (SEDL) region, all five states (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas) have instituted state-level policy for mentoring of beginning teachers. Teacher mentoring efforts contrast greatly among these states with respect to program components, funding, and longevity. Oklahoma's "residency" program for beginning teachers has been in place for two decades, is backed by state funds, and has supported 40,000 teachers since its inception (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000). State mentoring initiatives in Arkansas, Louisiana, and New Mexico are newly instituted, and program implementers are still in the early development stages of these state programs (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2000).

Mentoring in Texas

Since 1989, the state of Texas has experimented with mentoring for beginning teachers as a strategy to encourage and facilitate the retention of teachers through their first years in the profession. In 1990, when the state created its alternative certification program, mentoring was included as a requirement for all alternatively certified teachers; and in 1991, the requirement was mandated (although not funded by the state) for all teachers during their induction year. Although Senate Bill 1 in 1995 temporarily eliminated the

mandate, the mentoring requirement was reinstated in 1999 when the Texas State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) included in its Framework for Educator Preparation and Certification the stipulation that all educators granted a conditional teaching certificate have the support of a mentor during their two-year induction period. Although this mandate, too, is not currently funded by the state, as of September 1, 1999, the Texas Education Code includes the following amendment to 19 TAC Chapter 230, Subchapter V, Induction for Beginning Teachers:

230.610. Induction Program for Beginning Teachers.

General provisions. Beginning teachers who do not have prior teaching experience shall be assigned a mentor teacher.

Induction training for beginning teachers. Beginning teachers shall participate in teacher orientation, which may include specialized induction year program activities.

After failing to gain state appropriations for the mentoring component of its framework in 1999, SBEC sought and received funding from the U.S. Department of Education to pilot a support system named the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS). The state agency has begun work funded by a three-year, $12 million grant to develop and model a support and assessment system for beginning teachers.

TxBESS focuses on support systems for beginning teachers in their first and second years on the job. The goals of the program are to increase teacher retention and develop professional expertise. Starting in spring of 2000, regional partnerships, led by Texas' 20 Regional Education Service Centers, began piloting models of support designed to meet the needs of beginning teachers, students, and schools. While each Education Service Center and participating school district has discretion in planning and implementing mentoring activities that respond to local needs, TxBESS does institute certain program features. First is feedback from assessments developed for early-career teachers using the TxBESS Activity Profile (TAP). The TAP serves as a performance assessment instrument to provide formative information for the beginning teacher and summative information for the teacher preparation program from which he or she graduated. Second is a support team model in which the mentor teacher, an administrator, and a representative from an educator preparation program share responsibility for mentoring the beginning teacher. Third is training for the mentors and other support team members who will implement the TAP observation and assessment rubric.

Current funding for TxBESS has allowed a limited number of school districts to participate in the program. A number of districts are operating a smaller scale version of the TxBESS program in which limited support is provided for training and stipends. Many districts in the state are not yet participating in TxBESS. Future funding to support teacher mentoring in Texas beyond the three-year TxBESS implementation, either through subsequent federal grants or authorized by state legislation, is uncertain.

Description of SEDL's Teacher Mentoring Research Project

Rationale of SEDL's Study. The state of Texas is experiencing a shortage of teachers in the K-12 public schools—a shortage that will become even more serious when "student

enrollments reach an all-time high by 2007 and large numbers of current teachers retire" (Huling, 1998, p. 1). Recent actions by state policymakers and agencies demonstrate state-level concern for teacher retention and represent steps to address the problem through mentoring. With the initiation of the state-supported TxBESS by SBEC, SEDL sees a policy need and opportunity for collecting information on those mentoring programs that already exist in the state. These programs represent the varied and unstudied district-initiated and supported activities that have emerged since the state embarked on its mentoring exploration a decade ago. Established mentoring programs offer rich stories of how local education systems have designed and funded their own unique efforts to meet the needs of beginning teachers. Moreover, of interest to SEDL and all of the five states it serves is what kind of mentoring programs might encourage and facilitate the retention of teachers in schools and districts that serve student populations high in racial, ethnic, and language diversity.

Areas of Inquiry. The three policy questions appearing below guided SEDL's research on teacher mentoring programs as a strategy to address beginning teacher quality and retention. SEDL examined teacher mentoring programs as an important local response to state law on teacher retention and induction. As the questions indicate, the research focused on mentoring programs in the state of Texas with emphasis on existing strategies. SEDL also explored the implications of mentoring for teachers of diverse student populations.

1. How have schools and districts planned and implemented mentoring programs to respond to state policy on teacher induction?
2. What are the characteristics of district or school mentoring programs in the state with respect to resource allocation, range of activities, and effectiveness?
3. What are the implications of current mentoring activities for the retention of teachers in districts or schools with increasingly diverse student populations?

Methodology. SEDL pursued a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods to address the questions to be studied. In order to align the research focus with current knowledge and state policy priorities around mentoring, staff worked with an advisory team made up of state agency representatives, content advisors in the field of teacher mentoring and induction, and experts in research methodology. SEDL also contracted with researchers from The University of Texas at Austin and SBG Research to assist this investigation. The project's advisory team and research consultants reviewed the research plan and helped refine the design. The advisory team also provided information on the progress of state initiatives around teacher mentoring. This information, along with a review of the literature and conversations with local and state experts about mentoring programs and teacher retention, provided researchers with a better understanding of the context of mentoring in Texas.

SEDL used three primary data collection sources: a statewide survey of Texas school districts, quantitative analysis of administrative data available on three case study school districts in Texas, and interviews with staff involved in active mentoring programs in the three case sites. Researchers conducted the statewide survey during the spring of 2000 and used preliminary results to help inform the case study site selection. Case study interviews were conducted during the summer and fall of 2000 and administrative data

were analyzed during the fall of 2000. While the three data sources helped to inform each other in terms of final conclusions and implications (presented in Chapter Six of this report), each is meant to represent a separate yet complementary viewpoint on the questions under study. The methodology for each of the three data sources is described, along with their results, in the report.

Organization of This Report. This report represents findings from the research conducted by SEDL, which drew data from three sources as described above. After a literature review grounds this research in current understandings of teacher mentoring (Chapter Two), three separate chapters present findings and analysis from the statewide survey (Chapter Three), quantitative analysis of administrative data on the three case sites (Chapter Four), and reporting and analysis of findings from qualitative research at the three case sites (Chapter Five). Conclusions, implications, and recommendations that draw from findings of all three data sources are presented in the final chapter of this report. Appendices consist of the statewide survey instrument and an annotated bibliography of additional resources on mentoring.

Chapter Two

Lessons from Research on Teacher Mentoring:

Review of the Literature

Sue E. Mutchler

The practice of mentoring beginning teachers emerged in the 1980s as a professional development strategy for achieving a variety of goals. One goal focuses solely on teachers who are just entering the profession, while two others extend the benefits of mentoring to other educators in the school and district community. Mentorship promises potential benefits in at least the following three areas (Little, 1990):

1. New teacher induction – to help transition beginning teachers into the classroom and acculturate them to the specific school and district setting in which they will work.
2. Career enhancement – to provide an avenue for leadership, public recognition, and reward for skilled veteran teachers who serve their schools and districts as mentors, professional developers, and/or contributors to curriculum and instructional improvement.
3. Professional development and program innovation – to build capacity for school and district program innovation and to guide local education reform.

As local and state-initiated teacher mentoring programs have been implemented and refined over time, the first two of these goals have proven to be interrelated. Most veteran teachers who serve as mentors to new teachers are recognized by, and in some cases receive tangible rewards from, their school districts. The predominant district assumption is that, "the status and responsibilities of mentorship ... [will enable] those teachers to experience a renewal of their enthusiasm for teaching" (Little, 1990, p. 333). The level of career enhancement for most mentor teachers, however, appears to be limited. Most mentors receive the gratitude of their proteges and other peers, but few receive more than a modest monetary stipend. Those who do experience career advancement find it in administrative positions—not teaching. In sum, Little suggests that, unlike mentoring in business and industry, mentoring in the field of K-12 education "neither promises nor is premised upon an advancement incentive, but rather on other dimensions of work that contribute to career satisfaction" (1990, p. 333).

A positive effect of teacher mentoring on the third goal, building capacity for local professional development and program innovation, is even less readily apparent in school practice. Theoretically, the development of new and more effective classroom and collegial practices by teachers involved in a mentoring relationship can be diffused throughout their school and beyond. That is, through mentoring activities, both the novice teacher and mentor gain understandings and concrete skills that will benefit their students and can be shared with colleagues. Expertise in specific areas of curriculum and instruction can, for example, enable them to help grade level team members implement a district-adopted early reading program more effectively, or improve their academic department's practice of using cooperative learning. To date, however, research shows that few mentoring programs exhibit the mission or devote resources necessary to connect the program to these broader purposes of ongoing professional development and school improvement (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, and Yusko, 1999).

Little suggests that, ideally, the twin aims of a formal mentoring program are "to reward and inspire experienced teachers, while tapping their accumulated wisdom in the service of teachers and schools" (1990, p. 345). If this were the stated purpose of most mentoring programs, we would likely see more evidence in the literature of research on how such programs contribute to career enhancement and school improvement. We would also

likely see veteran teachers—not beginning teachers—at the center of mentoring discussions, because it is their experience and expertise that leverages productive change in professional practice.

The beginning teacher, however, has received greatest attention in both research and policy. Most mentoring policies and practices are designed to provide induction support that will encourage their retention in the profession. The remainder of this discussion thus focuses on what we know about mentoring as a strategy aimed at effectively inducting beginning teachers.

Beginning Teacher Induction

Today, statewide experiences with teacher shortage and high attrition in the early teaching years have heightened the concerns of legislatures and state education agencies across the nation. The present shortage of K-12 public school teachers is due to multiple factors that are playing out differently in every state. Historically, fewer and fewer college students have been entering the field of K-12 education. The proportion of college students majoring in education declined from 21 percent to 9 percent between 1975 and 1984 (Stoddart and Floden, 1995), and there is no indication this trend is likely to reverse.

Perhaps the most serious trend, however, is the high numbers of prepared teachers who are exiting the field. Research on teacher attrition in the late 1970s and early 1980s reported 25 percent of prepared teachers either never taught or left the profession within a few years (Croasmun, Hampton, and Herrmann, 1997). More recent data indicate that only about 60 percent of teacher education graduates enter the profession. Among graduating teachers, 22 percent leave in their first three years in the classroom, and nearly 30 percent have left the profession by the five year mark (Darling-Hammond, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996). A recent study of Texas teacher recruitment and retention reported that 19 percent of new teachers leave after only one year in the profession "primarily because they fail to get badly needed professional support" (Texas Center for Educational Research, 1999, p. 2).

Data such as these, and the actual school and district experiences behind them, create an urgency to attend to the needs of new teachers beyond the informal attention that individual teachers and schools have always paid. It has become clear that successful hiring practices are only part of the answer to teacher shortage. School and district leaders need sound strategies for ensuring beginning teachers' successful transition to the classroom and school and then retention beyond the first few years.

A broad base of agreement exists for the idea that beginning teachers need support during their transition into professional practice (Brighton, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, and Yusko, 1999; Huling-Austin, 1992; Little, 1990; Moir, Gless, and Baron, 1999; Odell and Huling, 2000; Stansbury and Zimmerman, 2000; Tellez, 1992). There is little argument that even the most well prepared beginning teacher needs individualized assistance during the first one to three years of practice. In 1980, only one state had implemented a mandated induction program. Since that time, such programs have become widespread; by 1988, 46 state legislatures had established mentoring or other

kinds of induction programs for new teachers (Wilkinson, 1997), and many large school districts had initiated support systems as well.

Although longitudinal data tying teacher mentoring to improved retention is still largely lacking, evidence from evaluation of one of the largest statewide programs— California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) system—is promising. Research shows that beginning teacher attrition in school districts operating BTSA programs has dropped to less than 10 percent (Wood, 1999). This is compared to a statewide trend of 50 percent attrition during the first five years of teaching. In one California community, Santa Cruz, evaluation studies show high rates of satisfaction, retention, and success with students among beginning teachers who participate in the district's New Teacher Project (Moir, Gless, and Baron, 1999). Similarly, in Louisiana results of a three-year implementation of the Framework for Inducting, Retaining, and Supporting Teachers (FIRST) show a 88 percent retention rate of certified new teachers in Thibodaux Parish (Breaux, 1999).

Some program evaluations show impact in areas other than new teacher retention. In Palatine, Illinois, although district records show little impact of its Helping Teacher program on teacher attrition, there is encouraging evidence of more rapid new teacher progress toward competency, which district leadership believes is contributing to the school system's increasing performance.

What Do Mentoring Programs Do?

Research indicates that professional development of teachers occurs in "stages" that extend, for most, well beyond their first year in the profession. For example, Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1995, p. 4) suggest that teaching expertise is not achieved until the five- to seven-year mark. They characterize a teacher's development as moving from an initial period of survival and discovery, through a time of experimentation and consolidation, and finally to a point of mastery and stabilization. This third stage, where Conyers, Ewy, and Vass (1999) say teacher "competence" is achieved, can then provide a solid foundation for future development toward "proficiency," or true expertise as a professional.

By and large, teacher mentoring programs implemented by school districts tend to focus on the "survival and discovery" stage, providing *support* to teachers in their first year in the classroom (Feiman-Nemser and Remillard, 1995; Huling-Austin, 1992). During this stage of teacher development, the goal is to give intensive assistance to new teachers in meeting their immediate needs as they adjust to the demands of teaching and become socialized to the school organization.

Support. Two major kinds of support in this development stage are considered necessary by researchers and practitioners: psychological support and instruction-related support (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, and Yusko, 1999; Stansbury and Zimmerman, 2000). Both categories of support have been found critical for new teachers who come to an array of new responsibilities with little time and few resources to direct toward transitioning into those responsibilities. In essence, "teaching is the only profession that

requires beginners to do the same work as experienced teachers" (Tellez, 1992). In the vast majority of schools, a beginning teacher carries a full teaching schedule while:

- adjusting to the school facility and routines,
- becoming oriented to district policies and procedures,
- becoming familiar with the specific curriculum and school- or district-adopted instructional strategies, and
- establishing for the first time his/her own classroom management structure and procedures.

Psychological support addresses the most immediate personal and emotional needs of teachers new to the classroom. This kind of support centers on protecting the new teacher from isolation by providing him or her with moral support and suggesting ways in which to balance the unfamiliar demands and expectations of students, parents, and the school at large. Here, veteran teachers create an emotional safety net by:

> serving as a sounding board and assuring beginners that their experience is normal, offering sympathy and perspective, and providing advice to help reduce the inevitable stress (Stansbury and Zimmerman, 2000, p. 4).

Instruction-related support addresses the beginning teacher's need to navigate her or his way through multiple tasks and problems that, in the future, will be seen as standard activities associated with teaching but, at first, are important hurdles for the novice. This kind of support focuses on the nuts and bolts of teaching, from locating materials and other resources available in the school, to organizing classroom space, to adding to his or her still-limited repertoire of instructional strategies (Stansbury and Zimmerman, 2000).

Researchers and teacher educators suggest, however, that it is not enough for mentoring programs to provide support. Noting that beginning teachers are learners as well as teachers, they assert the importance of a second function of mentoring programs—*development*—which begins during the first year of teaching but extends into that stage of teacher growth Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, and Yusko (1999) refer to as "experimentation and consolidation."

Development. Development focuses on building a personal understanding of pedagogy—the art and science of teaching and learning—that allows a teacher to continually refine and adjust his/her practice in order to consistently and effectively help students master content and skills. Mentoring for development centers on helping novices begin to "craft a professional identity through their struggles with and explorations of students and subject matter" (Feiman-Nemser and Remillard, 1995, p. 4). The ultimate goal is for the novice teacher to gain independence as a professional who is empowered to draw from a foundation of experience-based knowledge and "collective wisdom about good practice" (Feiman-Nemser, Parker, and Zeichner, 1990, p. 16).

Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) say a key aspect of mentoring for development is for teachers to become "skilled at independently identifying and addressing the idiosyncratic learning problems of their students" (p. 5). They suggest teachers gain these skills through critical self-reflection based on their students' behavior, student products, and

other evidence of the effectiveness of their own teaching practices. The increasing diversity of students in the U.S. makes the building of this kind of expertise even more important—and presents an additional challenge in mentoring. Newly prepared teachers tend to hold "assumptions about the learning and thinking of others that fit with their own [cultural experience]" (Feiman-Nemser and Remillard, 1995, p. 8). For those who have had limited contact with students whose ethnicity, language, or culture is different from their own, mentoring for development may thus require some relearning as well as new learning:

> In order to build bridges between students and subject matter, teachers need to know how their students think about what they are learning. Attending to the thinking of others means trying to see the world through their eyes (Feiman-Nemser and Remillard, 1995, p. 8).

The development function of mentoring is given priority by a number of individual school districts across the nation (Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall, 1998). Some have refined and expanded their programs over time to create a comprehensive, long-term approach to teacher development, such as the Palatine, Illinois Helping Teacher induction program. Initiated in 1987, this program is based on standards from the Mentoring and Leadership Resource Network, sponsored by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). The Helping Teacher program now includes a four-year curriculum for all teachers new to the district, differentiated for novice teachers and those with previous teaching experience. In addition to addressing critical first-year needs for assistance in classroom management and communicating with parents, Palatine's new teacher curriculum includes a focus on such higher-level issues as engaged student learning, teacher expectations for student achievement, self-reflection, and action research (Conyers, Ewy, and Vass, 1999). In the estimation of district leadership, new teachers complete the four-year program well prepared to meet standards of good teaching, such as those required for certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

Other school districts have created shorter, more intensive programs that attempt to move new teachers quickly to the point of competence and self-reflective practice. The 11-year-old New Teacher Project in Santa Cruz, California, for example, invests in the development of highly trained veteran teachers who are released from classroom responsibilities for a three-year period to work full-time and exclusively as mentors, or "advisors," to new teachers. This cadre of advisors provides personalized assistance to individual teachers and also works to ensure continuous development of its members' own skills as observers and mentors and ongoing improvement of the mentoring program. Each new teacher receives two years of mentoring support, both inside and outside his/her classroom, through a mix of weekly one-on-one meetings, classroom observations, lesson modeling, co-teaching, monthly seminars, and professional portfolio development. District leaders claim that this kind of intensive support allows beginning teachers to make progress toward and document their own professional growth along the continuum of teacher abilities set forth by the state's Standards for the Teaching Profession (Moir, Gless, and Baron, 1999).

Despite these examples from the field, however, the development function of mentoring does not at all appear to be implemented as frequently as the support function. Indeed, surveys of new teachers in 1990 found that they were "more likely to credit mentors with providing moral support or enlarging a pool of material resources than with exerting direct influence on their curriculum priorities or instructional methods" (Little, 1990, p. 342). Although comprehensive mentoring programs and high-intensity support strategies "are more effective at improving beginning teacher practice" (Stansbury and Zimmerman, 2000), they pose structural and resource challenges to any district that decides to promote longer-term development of its new teachers.

What Challenges Do Mentoring Programs Face?

As with any promising school improvement strategy, the implementation of a mentoring program faces multiple challenges. In their review of organized support efforts for beginning teachers, Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) identified challenges associated with four major program components: mentor teacher selection and support, time, teacher evaluation, and resource allocation.

Mentor Teacher Selection and Support. Although there is evidence that a great deal of informal assistance to new teachers from veteran teachers occurs, a formal mentoring relationship requires considerably more commitment and effort from the mentor teacher. Even more importantly, mentor teachers need specific skills in how to help novice teachers move out of the first-year survival and socialization mode and begin to grapple with deeper-level learnings around subject matter and instructional problem solving (Huling-Austin, 1992).

Schools and districts must consider the qualifications of individuals they choose to recruit and be prepared to overcome a range of logistical problems that can stand in the way of successful mentoring. Stansbury and Zimmerman highlight a number of specific challenges associated with recruiting, preparing, and rewarding mentor teachers. Framed as questions that require resolution by schools and districts implementing mentoring programs, these challenges include:

- What incentives will attract veteran teachers to mentoring?
- How is their ability to effectively "teach" other teachers assessed?
- What are the options for matching mentors and protégés (grade level, content area, school location)?
- What training do mentors need?

Time. "Mentors are more often constrained than enabled by the organizational circumstances in which they work" (Little, 1990, p. 342). In the day-to-day life of schools, time is one of the most challenging of these circumstances. The typical teacher's schedule includes minimal time without direct teaching responsibilities for students, and these "planning and preparation" periods tend to be filled with exactly that—lesson planning, assessing student work, and meeting with grade level or department colleagues

about shared responsibilities. Compared to their non-mentoring peers, it seems that new teachers and their mentors must somehow gain additional time for engaging in mentoring, or else they must use time already allocated for other teaching activities.

Challenges associated with time include:

- Where will the additional time required for mentoring activities be scheduled? During existing teacher planning and preparation periods? Before or after school? On weekends? Before the school year begins or after it ends?
- What logistical issues are associated with providing time for mentoring? Class scheduling? Teacher room assignments? Building access?
- What costs are associated with providing additional time? Will mentor teachers be compensated? Are substitutes needed? How will these costs be funded?

Teacher Evaluation. The connection between teacher support and teacher evaluation is a controversial one. Most researchers and teacher educators believe the two processes must be separate and different out of a concern for protecting the formative nature of performance assessment as a critical component of successful new teacher development (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, and Yusko, 1999). Huling-Austin (1992) voices a different concern and asserts that established state and district teacher summative evaluation instruments are inappropriate for novice teachers. Instead, she argues for a differentiated evaluation process for beginning teachers that recognizes their status as novices working toward proficiency.

Depending on a school district's local and state context for beginning teacher certification, appraisal, and school employment, there may be a number of different ways to manage the challenges associated with evaluating new teachers. In order to determine how mentoring assistance and performance appraisal must be related in their local context, schools and districts might consider:

- What local- or state-mandated expectations for teacher performance exist (e.g., established teaching standards or competencies)? How are these expectations connected to teacher appraisal and/or certification?
- What relationship exists between teacher appraisal and continued employment in the district? Between teacher appraisal and continued or advanced teacher certification?
- How is teacher evaluation viewed in the district culture? How is professional development viewed?
- How are beginning teachers viewed compared to veteran teachers, in terms of expected performance and professional development?
- Regardless of whether teacher assistance and evaluation are to be managed separately or as mutually reinforcing processes, what will be the ground rules? How is confidentiality dealt with among the beginning teacher, the mentor, and the teacher's principal or evaluator? Are criteria for improvement the same, or at least compatible, for the purposes of assisting and evaluating the new teacher?

Resource Allocation. Just as all students are unique, so too are new teachers. Some come to the classroom with educational and experiential backgrounds that have better prepared them to be solely responsible for their first classroom of students. Others come with needs for more intensive support. It is thus unlikely that a single set of mentoring activities or a standard progression of activities will be suitable for all new teachers. If program flexibility is important, schools and districts might meet this challenge by answering the following questions:

- How can the mentoring program be structured in such a way that those teachers who need more help receive it?
- Which kinds of assistance can be provided to all new teachers? Which will more likely need to be provided on an as-needed basis?
- What mechanisms will allow for necessary individualized support?
- What resources are available to mentors beyond their own time and sets of skills?

Beyond Beginning Teacher Induction

> If mentoring is to function as a strategy of reform, it must be linked to a vision of good teaching, guided by an understanding of teacher learning, and supported by a professional culture that favors collaboration and inquiry (Feiman-Nemser, 1996, p. 1).

A five year study by the National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, "Learning from Mentors," yielded initial findings pointing to five important issues that may be important to creating successful mentoring programs that contribute to the quality of K-12 teachers in the profession (National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, 2000). As stated by NCRTL:

- Mentoring must be connected to a vision of good teaching, if it is to contribute to educational reform.
- Mentoring must be informed by an understanding of how one learns to teach.
- Mentoring must be viewed as a professional practice, not merely a new social role for experienced teachers.
- Mentors need time to mentor and opportunities to learn to mentor.
- Mentoring is affected by the professional culture of the school and broader policies and values.

Researchers whose work is referenced in this review echo the first four of these findings. By and large, they argue that the mentoring of beginning teachers must be grounded in

professional knowledge and skill. As such, the professional practice of mentoring requires resources—particularly in the form of time and training.

The fifth finding, though, might warrant additional inquiry by policy makers and educators who are concerned about inducting, developing, and retaining quality teachers in the longer term and in all schools—not just those schools that already enjoy a strong professional culture. School culture has received attention since the 1970s when effective schools research found correlation among certain types of organizational behavior (e.g., instructional leadership) and student success, and today researchers continue to explore the relationship between the school environment and the quality of the *student learning* that takes place there. NCRTL research draws attention to the relationship between school culture and the *teaching* that takes place there.

In her review of mentoring program implementation studies over a decade ago, Little (1990) found that most mentoring programs in the U.S. accept and build from the traditional view of teaching as an "individualistic and egalitarian" profession. NCRTL researchers who examined teacher mentoring in different nations found corroboration for the existence of this kind of professional culture in the U.S. The goal of mentoring is to help novices find their own "teaching style" and learn to contribute to ongoing curriculum development and reform. This is in contrast to other cultures, such as China, where mentors tend to be viewed as experts whose pedagogy should be emulated by novice teachers in order to implement effectively an established national curriculum.

In Little's opinion, the more-or-less unspoken definition in the U.S. of teachers as having a certain "equality in autonomy" makes it difficult for the idea of mentoring to take root in the professional culture of teaching. In the culture of U.S. public schools, there exist few precedents for positive differentiation among teachers' expertise or roles. So, it is not common for mentors to be viewed as teachers whose experience and expertise set them apart from their peers in a positive sense. Instead, they are viewed as peers either engaged in "help giving" or doing "extra work for extra pay" (1990, pp. 340, 342). Little concludes that, when problems emerge during the implementation of mentoring initiatives, teachers and administrators tend to conceive of them as "problems of a program to be marketed rather than as problems of a culture to be built" (Little, 1990, p. 341).

Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, and Yusko (1999) express a related concern regarding the relationship between school culture and mentoring. They claim research shows that even a well-resourced, formal mentoring program "may perpetuate traditional norms and practices rather than promote high-quality teaching" (p. 4) unless the explicit goal of the program is to build teaching professionals who can foster complex student learning. These researchers say that a program that focuses only on new teacher support "favors the agendas of individual teachers and works against a sense of collective responsibility for student learning" (p. 10). Feiman-Nemser et al (1999) advocate that schools and districts, instead, view beginning-teacher induction as part of the broader system of professional development and accountability for educators.

In a recent study, Ingersoll (1999) found evidence that points to other factors in the school culture that might be considered along with teacher mentoring if a district chooses to take a comprehensive approach to stemming the tide of teacher attrition. Based on an

investigation of reasons given by teachers for leaving the profession, his data suggest that teacher turnover can be positively impacted through improvements in four areas of the school organization. None of these solutions—increased support from the school administration, enhanced faculty input into school decision-making, reduction of student discipline problems, and increased salaries— explicitly focus on new teacher support.

Huling-Austin (1992) sums up the critical connection between beginning teacher success and factors in school culture and organization as follows:

> If schools operate in ways that are unresponsive to the needs of the students, it is unreasonable to expect novice teachers to learn to operate effectively in them (pp. 178-179).

Summary

Lessons from the literature suggest that a well-developed mentoring program for new teachers can contribute to the quality of their practice, not merely their retention in the profession. Moreover, some would say that an education system's commitment to an ongoing, comprehensive mentoring program could go a long way toward achieving the broader potential of mentorship in K-12 education. Such a program could build the instructional leadership of veteran teachers who serve as mentors, thus serving a career enhancement purpose, and engage all educators in ongoing professional development and program innovation—toward the ultimate improvement of the school program.

Chapter Three

Teacher Mentoring Survey of Texas School Districts:

Summary of Results

Diane T. Pan

In order to gain an understanding of the current status of teacher mentoring activities in Texas school districts, researchers conducted a statewide survey that was sent to district superintendents during the spring of 2000. These data enabled SEDL to assess the duration and scope of mentoring programs, range of activities, use of resources, and results. The survey was designed to help answer two of the three research questions listed in Chapter One:

1. How have schools and districts planned and implemented mentoring programs to respond to state policy on teacher induction?
2. What are characteristics of district or school mentoring programs in the state with respect to resource allocation, range of activities, and effectiveness?

Survey Methodology

The district superintendent was the addressee of the survey form and he or she was instructed to fill out the survey or designate the appropriate staff person to provide the information about mentoring in his or her school district. Questions were limited to those that a district superintendent or designated central office staff person would be able to address. The sample frame consisted of all Texas school districts. The district level designation for this survey sample was sufficient for SEDL's focus on a broad, state-wide data collection effort, although mentoring activities may be occurring formally and informally at the school and even school department level in some areas.

Survey Instrument. Researchers developed the survey instrument based on a general understanding of mentoring in Texas gained from a review of the literature on teacher mentoring and conversations with state policy staff with expertise in teacher mentoring and the TxBESS program. SEDL's advisory panel for this project reviewed drafts of the instrument and provided critical feedback for its development. Local school staff and SEDL staff with current or previous knowledge of mentoring activities in local schools piloted the survey. A mix of forced-choice, scale, and open-ended questions was used in the survey, and it was available in hardcopy and in an online version. A copy of the survey instrument appears in Appendix A.

Implementation. SEDL mailed surveys to school superintendents with a cover letter and instructions. The instructions asked recipients to submit written documentation about their mentoring programs (district policy, description of mentoring activities, assessment materials) along with their completed survey form. Researchers conducted a second mailing as a follow-up and reminder to those who did not respond to the first mailing. To increase the interest of respondents in completing the survey, SEDL offered incentives to schools in the form of 1) a chance to win a small stipend (towards the purchase of school materials), 2) the option of completing the survey on-line through a web-based interface, and 3) the opportunity to receive a copy of the final report on teacher mentoring.

Confidentiality. SEDL informed survey respondents of the intended use of the data that were collected and the level of confidentiality that protected their responses. To guide

the research, staff adapted a confidentiality protocol previously established by SEDL policy staff.

Data Entry and Analysis. SEDL conducted manual entry into a web-interfaced database. Entries were double-keyed and error checking was conducted before analysis. Simple descriptive and comparative statistics were used to examine data in response to the relevant research questions. Data analysis was performed using a computer statistical analysis software (SPSS).

Description of Responding Districts

SEDL mailed the teacher mentoring survey to 1,049 Texas school districts. A total of 358 districts returned completed surveys, representing a 34 percent response rate. Of those districts that responded, 275 provided identifying information that was linked to demographic data available through the Texas Education Agency. Seven of the eight largest districts in the state returned completed surveys. The districts that sent identifying information with their completed surveys represent 51 percent of all students in the state and 49 percent of all teachers in the state. Key characteristics of students and teachers appear below.

Characteristics of students in responding districts closely resemble those of the state as a whole in terms of race/ethnicity and in terms of proportions of bilingual/ESL, economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, and special education students. Similarly, teachers in the surveyed districts are aligned with teachers statewide with regard to race/ethnicity. In terms of teacher tenure, however, surveyed districts generally have a fewer proportion of novice teachers (zero to five years tenure) and a greater proportion of experienced teachers (six or more years tenure). It is uncertain how this disparity may have affected survey results, however, researchers conjecture that the presence/absence of novice teachers in a district might affect administrators' level of attention to new teacher induction and concern with teacher turnover.

Table 3.1

Student Enrollment and Teacher Population of Responding School Districts

	Responding Districts	Texas	Percent of State
Student Enrollment	2,014,245	3,945,367	51.05
Teacher Population	128,295.7	259,739.1	49.39

n=275

Table 3.2

Race/Ethnic Characteristics of Students and Teachers of Responding School Districts and Statewide

Race/Ethnic Group	White	Hispanic	African American	Other
Students				
Responding Districts	41%	41%	15%	3%
Statewide	44%	39%	14%	3%
Teachers				
Responding Districts	72%	17%	10%	1%
Statewide	75%	16%	8%	1%

n=275

Table 3.3

Teacher Tenure at Responding School Districts

Years of Experience	First year	1 to 5 years	6 to 10 years	11 to 20 years	20 or more years
Responding Districts	2.0%	7.7%	24.0%	37.5%	28.9%
Statewide	7.6%	26.7%	17.7%	27.5%	20.5%

n=275

Table 3.4

Student Characteristics in Responding School Districts

	Students in Responding Districts	Percent of All Students in Responding Districts	Statewide Percentages
Bilingual/ESL	266,200	13.2	12.2
Economically Disadvantaged	1,000,507	49.7	48.5
Limited English Proficient	297,279	14.8	13.6
Special Education	234,208	11.6	12.1

n=275

Survey Results

The results of the teacher mentoring survey appear below and are organized into six main sections: perception of teacher shortages, motivations for providing teacher mentoring, mentor program structure, mentor program characteristics, needs and barriers, and program results. These thematic categories contribute to a better understanding of how districts planned and implemented mentoring and the role of motivating factors, including state policy on teacher induction (research question one). A broad understanding of resources, activities, and effectiveness from the school district perspective is also gained through this analysis (research question two).

Perception of Teacher Shortages

Generally, survey respondents do not perceive an overall teacher shortage. Many districts (75 percent) do express that they are experiencing shortages in certain areas (grade levels, content areas, or specializations). The shortage of teachers has affected some districts by increasing teacher training and recruitment costs. More than one quarter felt that teacher shortage is not affecting their districts, although a large number of smaller districts reported this status than larger districts.

Table 3.5

Perception of Effects of Teacher Attrition on Responding Districts

	Percent of Responding Districts
Shortages in certain grade levels, content areas, or specializations	75.3
An increase in teacher training costs	28.1
An increase in teacher recruitment costs	25.8
Negative effects on students or faculty	21.7
An overall teacher shortage in the district	15.0
Other	4.4
Unsure	.8

Multiple response item, n=356

Motivations for Providing Teacher Mentoring

Mentoring has become an important strategy for improving retention of beginning teachers. A number of states in SEDL's region are currently facing a teacher shortage problem, including Texas. Texas districts that returned surveys, however, ranked teacher quality as the priority reason to use mentoring. Survey respondents expressed that the most important motivations for implementing mentoring are to improve the skills of

beginning teachers (72 percent) and increase student success (62 percent). Beginning teacher retention is also important, but less so than teacher quality concerns.

Table 3.6

Motivations for Implementing Teacher Mentoring Activities

	Percent of Responding Districts
Need to improve skills and knowledge of beginning teachers	71.9
Desire to increase student achievement	61.0
Need to improve retention of beginning teachers	46.8
Desire to build collegial culture among teachers	38.4
Compliance with state policy	29.0
Response to research results showing benefits of mentoring	24.2
Teacher preparation program request for mentoring activities	15.3
Need to attract new staff to the district	13.6
Teacher requests for mentoring activities	12.5
Campus requests for mentoring activities	9.2
Other	4.2

Multiple response item, n=358

Mentor Program Structure

The survey collected information that contributed to an understanding of the scale of programs existing in the state and the level of focus (state, district, campus) of mentoring activity. As the discussion of timelines and role of the district below reveals, mentoring is fairly widespread in the state and district administration generally plays a lesser role in mentoring than do school campuses.

Timelines. Most districts indicated that their mentoring activities have either increased or have had periods of increase and decrease since an induction requirement first became part of state law in Texas in 1990. Only a small portion of those who could recall a start date for their district mentoring programs reported a date before 1990. Mentoring programs began in the remaining districts throughout the 1990-2000 time span, with slight jumps in the initiation of new programs during 1990 and 1995. The state mandate for teacher mentoring may partly explain the increase of activity since 1990. A small number of districts (34) stated that they do not provide mentoring support.

Table 3.7

Year in which Districts Began Mentoring Support

	Number of Districts	Cumulative Percent
Mentoring not provided	34	9.9
Unsure of start date	84	34.2
Before 1990	20	40.0
1990	26	47.5
1991	8	49.9
1992	15	54.2
1993	13	58.0
1994	13	61.7
1995	31	70.7
1996	23	77.4
1997	18	82.6
1998	23	89.3
1999	27	97.1
2000	10	100.0

n=345

Role of the District Administration. While district administration does play a role in mentoring programs, the primary responsibility for mentoring falls to the individual campus administration. Table 3.8 shows that 65 percent of districts express that teacher mentoring is within the jurisdiction of campus administration. About one quarter of districts locate primary responsibility at the district administrative level.

Table 3.8

Administrative Level with Primary Responsibility for Teacher Mentoring Activities

	Percent of Responding Districts
District administration	26.9
Campus administration	65.0
Faculty in individual campus departments or grade levels	2.5
Faculty of a teacher preparation program	.6
Other	.3

n=353

The district administration most often sees itself in the role of determining district-wide policy, overseeing mentoring, providing technical assistance, and assigning beginning teachers a mentor[1]. Less than 15 percent of districts plays a role in planning mentoring activities for individual campuses.

Table 3.9

Role of District Administration in Mentoring Activities

	Percent of Responding Districts
Determines district policy and communicates policy to schools	53.2
Oversees and monitors teacher mentoring activities	41.4
Provides technical assistance	40.8
Assigns beginning teachers a mentor	40.3
Provides other resources (e.g. financial, staff)	36.6
Selects mentors	34.4
Provides mentor training	33.5
Plans mentoring activities at the campus level	14.6
District administration is not involved in mentoring	8.7
Other	3.1
Unsure	2.8

Multiple response item, n=355

Mentor Program Characteristics

Survey information helped shed light on mentoring program characteristics that are linked to inputs and resources necessary for supporting teacher mentoring. These program features were thought best gained from the survey, due to its emphasis on district-level and district-wide activity rather than on how mentoring is implemented at the campus or classroom levels. Researchers worked from the assumption that the perspective from the district administration would best inform a broader structural context for mentoring. Case study results, meanwhile, were intended as the primary source data on the range of successful mentoring practices taken up by local schools (see Chapter Five).

[1] As currently written, state law requires that all beginning teachers be "assigned a mentor teacher," so districts may comply with the law by making such an assignment. No further policy direction is given regarding actual mentoring support activities.

Resources. In the table below, it is clear that staff time is a critical resource for mentoring programs. Training for mentors is also a resource identified by nearly 40 percent of districts. Funds for stipends and for substitute teacher wages are also important. However, far more districts use resources to pay for mentor stipends than for beginning teacher stipends. Approximately 28 percent of districts provide an incentive or stipend to their mentors while only 5 percent provide incentives or stipends for beginning teachers.

Table 3.10

Resources Used to Operate Mentoring Programs

	Percent of Responding Districts
Mentors' time	48.9
Beginning teachers' time	41.9
Training for mentors	38.5
Materials or equipment	36.8
Administrative staff time	28.7
Mentor incentive or stipend	27.8
Substitute teacher wages	17.1
Beginning teacher stipend	5.1
Other	2.2
No resources are used to operate mentoring	19.4

Multiple response item, n=358

Assessment of Beginning Teachers. Nearly 60 percent of respondents indicate that beginning teachers are assessed as part of the district's mentoring activities. While formative assessment of beginning teachers is a key component of the state's TxBESS program, it is not clear whether districts' participation in TxBESS increased the likelihood that they would practice assessments as part of mentoring. Data do show that those districts that are involved in TxBESS and those that are not participating in the state initiative perform assessments as part of mentoring for beginning teachers. This may indicate that assessment is already an established part of teacher mentoring at the local level.

Mentor Training. The data indicate two patterns with regard to mentor training. Districts either provide a short-term (less than one day to one week) training (31 percent) or provide training opportunities throughout the school year for mentors (34 percent). Nearly one quarter of the districts provide no training for their mentors.

Table 3.11

Mentor Training

	Percent of Responding Districts
Ongoing during the first year as a mentor	34.0
Ongoing during the first semester as a mentor	.8
More than two weeks	.3
One to two weeks	2.2
One day to one week	20.7
Less than one day	10.1
Mentor training is not currently provided	23.5
Unsure	8.1

n=354

Outside Support. Some districts receive outside funds for mentoring (38 percent) and a substantial number receive non-financial support (72 percent). The Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) provide non-financial support to 60 percent of districts and funding to 19 percent. Much of this support from the ESCs might be a result of training and orientations provided to districts beginning in early 2000 as part of the TxBESS program. Other minor sources of outside support include teacher preparation programs and state government.

Table 3.12

Outside Financial Support Received by Districts for Mentoring Activities

	Percent of Responding Districts
Education Service Center	18.7
State government	14.2
Teacher preparation program	5.7
Federal government	3.1
Other	1.7
Unsure	5.6
No outside financial support is received	62.3

Multiple response item, n=354

Table 3.13

Outside Non-financial Support Received by Districts for Mentoring Activities

	Percent of Responding Districts
Education Service Center	60.1
Teacher preparation program	15.9
Other Texas school district	6.8
Professional association or organization	5.7
State government	3.7
Other	2.3
Unsure	5.6
No outside non-financial support is received	28.0

Multiple response item, n=354

Needs and Barriers

From the district perspective, the greatest barrier to the provision of effective mentoring to beginning teachers involves the resources available to allow mentor teachers to participate in mentoring activities. First, districts face a scarcity of funds to pay stipends to mentor teachers. Second, district respondents perceive experienced teachers as not having the extra time to devote to mentoring. Veteran teachers, nonetheless, generally do not lack the willingness to volunteer to serve as mentors; only 14 percent of respondents indicated that experienced teachers were unwilling to serve as mentors.

Insufficient time and staffing resources are also frequently cited barriers with respect to the lack of district and campus administrators' time, and lack of training for mentors. Need for guidance and other resources and materials are also mentioned as barriers to effective mentoring. Only 18 percent of respondents stated that they have not experienced major barriers in implementing their program.

Responding districts rated the mentoring support they provide to beginning teachers fairly evenly along a continuum between programs that seem to be established and working well and programs that still need improvement. More than 40 percent of districts reported that their programs are well established and either already provide a broad range of activities that benefit teachers or need only minor improvements. An equal proportion of districts describe their programs as relatively new, but are seeing improvement or understand that there is a need for improvement. A few districts (12.3 percent) have not developed their program beyond the planning stages.

Table 3.14

Barriers to Implementing Mentoring Activities

	Percent of Responding Districts
Stipends for mentors are scarce or not available	64.4
Experienced teachers do not have the time to serve as mentors	56.2
Administrators do not have the time to oversee mentoring activities	40.4
District and/or campuses have limited expertise in planning or operating a mentoring program	29.1
Training for mentors is scarce or not available	23.4
State guidance or assistance for mentoring is not sufficient	22.9
Resources or materials for mentoring activities are scarce or not available	19.5
Experienced teachers are unwilling to volunteer to serve as mentors	14.4
Beginning teachers are not interested in receiving mentoring support	2.0
Other	5.6
We have not experienced major barriers	17.5

Multiple response item, n=354

Table 3.15

Assessment of Mentoring Support

	Percent of Responding Districts
Contains a broad range of activities and positively affects all beginning teachers	10.9
Is well established but might benefit from minor improvements or additions	30.6
Is a relatively new program and seems to be improving	17.7
Is just beginning and still has many areas to be improved	22.3
Has not developed beyond the planning stages and will take time to implement effectively	12.3
Other	6.3

n=346

Nearly all responding districts identified one or more supports that would improve their mentoring program; only eight districts reported needing no supports. Districts overwhelmingly identified the need for additional financial support for mentors, beginning teachers, or program staff. A majority (56 percent) also identified a need for mentor training. Some districts (29 percent) also felt that support for materials and equipment would improve their mentoring efforts.

More than a third of responding districts (39 percent) felt that technical assistance in the planning and implementation of mentoring activities would improve their program. Advice or assistance from other districts with successful programs was identified by 21 percent of respondents, and nearly the same proportion of districts felt that evaluation of the effectiveness of their mentoring activities would provide feedback for improving their program. Guidance from the state was identified by 18 percent as a potential source of program improvement.

Some districts (12.3 percent) felt that the participation of a local teacher preparation program would improve their mentoring program. Fewer districts (9.7 percent) felt that assessment of their beginning teachers would improve their program.

Table 3.16

Supports that Would Improve Mentoring Program

	Percent of Responding Districts
Financial support for mentors, beginning teachers, or program staff	77.8
Training for mentors	55.8
Technical assistance for planning and implementing mentoring activities	38.7
Materials or equipment	29.1
Advice or assistance from other school districts with successful programs	20.5
Evaluation of the effectiveness of mentoring activities	18.5
State guidance on how to plan and implement mentoring activities	17.7
Participation of local teacher preparation program	12.3
Assessment of beginning teachers	9.7
Other	3.7
No supports are needed	2.3

Multiple response item, n=351

Program Results

As presented earlier in this chapter, the most prevalent motivation identified by districts for providing mentoring to beginning teachers is to improve the skills and knowledge of beginning teachers. The majority of responding districts perceive that they are attaining that goal; 63 percent identify the improved skills and knowledge of beginning teachers as a result of mentoring activities. Improved job satisfaction (47 percent), student achievement (33 percent), and work environment (32 percent) are also observed. Teacher retention is lower on the list (23 percent), but observed.

Table 3.17

Most Important Results of Mentoring Support for Beginning Teachers

	Percent of Responding Districts
Improved skills and knowledge of beginning teachers	62.5
Increased job satisfaction among beginning teachers	46.5
Increased student achievement	32.7
Improved campus work environment	31.8
Increased retention of beginning teachers	22.8
Improved relationship between district and teacher preparation program	6.5
Other	1.7
Unsure	3.7
No identified results of mentoring activities	20.8

Multiple response item, n=351

Retention of beginning teachers is not perceived by responding districts as the most important result of mentoring support, and the data above reveal that other results such as teacher quality, work environment, and student success are valued more by districts. At the same time, however, responding districts do feel that mentoring activities contribute to both teacher quality and teacher retention almost equally.

Table 3.18

Success Rating of Mentoring Activities

	Very successful	Fairly successful	Not very successful	Not at all successful
Improves the quality of beginning teachers	18.5%	66.8%	12.1%	2.6%
Retains beginning teachers	16.1%	65.4%	14.6%	3.9%

n=340

Summary

Results from SEDL's statewide survey of Texas school districts reveal important findings for an understanding of the scope and scale of beginning teacher mentoring activity in the state. Survey respondents indicate a clear commitment to supporting beginning teachers for the purposes of addressing teacher quality and retention and ultimately serving students better. The district-level analysis that the survey afforded reveals that successful and comprehensive mentoring efforts are difficult to implement and require both financial and non-financial inputs. Teacher mentoring activities are most often the responsibility of local campuses, although district administration plays an important role in key areas. A majority of districts are implementing at least a minimal teacher mentoring program for beginning teachers. Many districts are working to improve their services to beginning teachers and, through their survey responses, identify key resources that might assist them in their efforts.

Major conclusions drawn from these survey findings are incorporated with the conclusions of the two other research strands and are presented in the final chapter of this report (Chapter Six).

Chapter Four

Mentoring Beginning Teachers:

The Implications Of Contextual Conditions

Kelly S. Shapley

Joan Bush

Increasing teachers' learning opportunities is currently viewed as one of the most important ways to improve the quality of teaching, and research suggests that mentoring by experienced teachers is an important reform strategy (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1999; National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, 2000). Assigning mentors to work with beginning teachers is an approach that, according to Little (1999), has the potential benefit of transitioning beginning teachers into the classroom, specific school, and district setting in which they will work.

Policies and practices aimed toward establishing mentoring programs for beginning teachers as a means to improve teaching and learning are based on at least three critical assumptions about the impact of mentoring. First, providing induction support will help new teachers adjust to the demands of teaching and become socialized to the school organization (Feiman-Nemser and Remillard, 1995). Second, mentoring will support the pedagogical development of new teachers (Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, and Yusko, 1999); and third, mentoring will encourage the retention of beginning teachers in the profession (Huling, 1998). These assumptions about mentoring are embedded within a broader supposition that well-qualified, veteran teachers are available to serve as mentors, and that mentoring programs will tap their "accumulated wisdom" to serve teachers and schools" (Little, 1999, p. 345).

When examining mentoring from a policy perspective, it is important to consider how mentoring programs fit within the professional and social culture of schools, as well as the political context of the district and state. To date, little research on teacher mentoring has focused on school and district contextual factors that might influence the effectiveness of mentor programs and practices. Recognizing this missing element, one component of SEDL's research was a quantitative investigation of contextual variables related to districts, schools, and teachers for three case studies of notable mentoring programs in Texas school districts. Considering the current high rate of beginning teacher attrition in Texas, the study explored conditions that might reveal problems new teachers face during the first induction years.

The purpose for the quantitative study was twofold. First, in-depth descriptive information was provided as contextual background for the case-study sites. The analysis explored how existing school, teacher, and student characteristics pose challenges for the mentoring of beginning teachers. Student diversity was of particular interest. Second, researchers investigated a wide range of teacher and school characteristics that were either known or suspected to be associated with teacher quality and retention. The study attempted to identify district- and campus-level factors that might contribute to beginning teacher attrition/turnover in order to understand how mentoring activities can be designed to support novice teachers. Researchers investigated factors such as teacher experience, age, and degrees held, as well as organizational conditions such as student diversity and academic achievement. More specifically, the study addressed two broad questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the case-study districts, schools, students, and teachers (i.e., demographic and academic)?

2. What is each district's current teacher attrition/turnover status, and what are the associated variables (i.e., school conditions or teacher characteristics)?

Approach and Method

Selection of the Case-Study Sites

SEDL researchers selected three Texas school districts to study teacher-mentoring programs. The selection process, which was necessarily purposeful, involved three stages. Researchers first narrowed the pool of potential case study sites to a group of districts that included:

- 20 districts with the highest student enrollments,
- districts recommended by the project's advisory board and others familiar with local mentoring programs, and
- districts that, through the mail survey, self-described their mentoring programs as well established or successful.

Second, districts were eliminated from the initial pool of potential sites if:

- no evidence indicated a successful or well-established mentoring program, or
- demographic data did not indicate a notable degree of diversity in the student population (race/ethnicity, limited English proficiency, and economically disadvantaged).

This preliminary site selection process produced eight "finalist" districts. The list of finalists was sent to the advisory board for recommendations. Based on feedback from advisors and further application of selection criteria (established mentoring programs, diverse student population, geographic diversity), the districts were ranked in order of appropriateness for this study. Based on the ranking, districts were contacted and invited to participate in the study. Two of the first-choice districts agreed to participate in the study. The third first-choice district was unable to participate due to program constraints, so one of the second-choice districts was substituted instead. The three districts that provided case study information are referred to in this report by pseudonyms, as follows:

- Urban Independent School District (UISD)
- County Wide Independent School District (CWISD)
- Mid-City Independent School District (MCISD)

Data Sources

Data for the participating districts and schools were derived from three primary sources: (a) a review of district web sites, (b) the Texas Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), and (c) the Texas Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS). The PEIMS and AEIS are data collection systems designed and overseen by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The TEA systematically collects and compiles standard

information each year to produce a comprehensive database that provides comparative statewide statistics for schools. Reports and databases are available on TEA's web site (www.tea.state.tx.us). The PEIMS database includes descriptive information about organizations, district finances, staff, and students. The AEIS pulls together a wide range of information on student performance in each school and district. Performances on a number of indicators (e.g., criterion-referenced tests, attendance rates, dropout rates) are disaggregated by ethnicity, special education, and low-income status. AEIS reports also provide extensive information on school and district staff, finances, programs, and demographics.

Method

Information was extracted from district-level reports and campus-level files to describe the demographic and achievement characteristics of the three case study districts and their campuses. District-level descriptive information was collected through 1998-99 AEIS reports, 1998-99 district accountability tables, and from information on each district's web site. Campus-level descriptive information was extracted from the TEA web site for the 1998-99 school year. AEIS files included campus reference information, student demographic information, student achievement information, and campus staff information. The downloaded files were imported into Excel and merged into one master file containing campus-level information.

PEIMS data for the 1998-1999 to the 1999-2000 school years were obtained through an open-records request to the TEA. The PEIMS data included teacher/special duty teacher identification information, demographic information, employment and salary information, employee responsibilities, and permit information. PEIMS files for each school year were converted to Excel, imported into the SPSS statistical program, and merged into one master file. The 1998-99 campus-level AEIS data were matched to the master files. In subsequent chapters of this report, additional procedures will be described as findings are presented.

Characteristics of the Case-Study Sites

District Characteristics

Information in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provides academic comparisons for the participating districts. Basic demographic information for each site is summarized in the description of case site mentoring programs in Chapter Five.

Academic Achievement. Texas collects a wide range of information on the performance of students, and information is provided in AEIS reports that are available each year in late fall. A school Accountability Rating is derived from a subset of performance measures. Individual schools and districts are classified as either *Exemplary, Recognized, Academically Acceptable,* or *Low Performing*.

Student performance indicators reported for this study included the *Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)* passing rates by subject, attendance rates, dropout rates, as well as statistics related to student college admissions. Accountability ratings are reported for districts and schools, but alternative education campuses have a different rating system and indicators. School ratings are not made for early education centers.

As shown in Table 4.1, both MCISD and CWISD received the Academically Acceptable rating. UISD was rated Unacceptable because of data quality problems and low-performing schools. UISD had the highest percentage of Exemplary campuses (9 percent), while MCISD had far more Recognized campuses (41 percent). The majority of schools received Academically Acceptable ratings.

Table 4.1

District Academic Profiles

	MCISD	CWISD	UISD
AEIS Accountability Ratings			
District Rating	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Campus Ratings (Regular)	N=37	N=38	N=96
Exemplary	2 (5%)	2 (5%)	9 (9%)
Recognized	15 (41%)	4 (11%)	7 (7%)
Academically Acceptable	20 (54%)	29 (76%)	63 (66%)
Low Performing	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (17%)
Campus Ratings (Alternative Ed.)	N=3	N=4	N=1
Alternative Ed.: Acceptable	2	4	1
Alternative Ed.: Needs Review	1	0	0
Student College Admissions			
Taking SAT/ACT	58%	37%	63%
Scoring Above SAT/ACT Criterion	23%	30%	43%

Note. Statistics based on TEA 1999 district accountability summaries and 1998-99 AEIS Reports. In CWISD, three early education centers were not rated.

District college admission statistics showed that higher percentages of MCISD (58 percent) and UISD (63 percent) students took the SAT/ACT, and a markedly higher percentage of UISD students (43 percent) scored above the SAT/ACT criterion.

District student attendance and dropout rates, and percent passing the state-mandated achievement measure, which are shown in Table 4.2, further explain each district's accountability rating.

Table 4.2

District Student Accountability Data Percentages

	MCISD	CWISD	UISD
Attendance Rate	96	94	94
Dropout Rate-All	1.9	3.4	2.0[a]
African American	2.1	3.5	2.7[a]
Hispanic	2.4	4.5	2.9[a]
White	1.6	2.4	0.8[a]
Economically Disadvantaged	1.9	3.4	2.2[a]
Students Passing TAAS Reading-All	87	81	79
African American	83	72	68
Hispanic	86	74	70
White	91	89	93
Economically Disadvantaged	83	73	66
Students Passing TAAS Math-All	85	79	76
African American	80	64	57
Hispanic	85	75	67
White	90	86	90
Economically Disadvantaged	82	73	63
Students Passing TAAS Writing-All	85	81	82
African American	79	73	72
Hispanic	85	75	73
White	89	88	92
Economically Disadvantaged	84	73	69

Note. Statistics based on percentages in 1998-99 AEIS reports. *TAAS* refers to the *Texas Assessment of Academic Skills*.

[a]Dropout rates for UISD were underestimated due to data-quality problems.

Compared to MCISD, dropout statistics for CWISD were considerably higher for *all* students and subgroups, with the exception of White students. The dropout statistics for UISD were underestimated due to data-quality problems. *TAAS* reading, mathematics, and writing passing rates were comparable across all districts for White students—however, MCISD's African American, Hispanic, and disadvantaged students performed notably better than those student groups in the other districts. The district's passing rates were generally 10 or more percentage points higher for each of the subjects.

School Characteristics

Additional analyses were undertaken to explore school-level differences within and across districts. Due to the large number of campuses in each district, grouping variables were used to reduce student and teacher data to an understandable form. Considering previous research literature on teacher attrition/retention and emerging district-level differences, three categories were created for comparison purposes: school level, school diversity, and school achievement. School level was defined as *elementary*, *middle*, and *high* schools. School diversity was a dichotomous variable based on two levels: *Low Diversity*—the percentage of nonwhite students was less than 55 percent, and *High Diversity*—the percentage of nonwhite students was 55 percent or more. School achievement was a dichotomous variable based on two levels: *Low Achievement*—a campus accountability rating of Acceptable or Low Performing, and *High Achievement*—a campus accountability rating of Exemplary or Recognized.

Student Demographic Characteristics. Student demographics are summarized in Table 4.3 by school type. Across all districts, higher percentages of elementary students were classified as economically disadvantaged. This is probably because parents are more likely to enroll lower-grades students in the national free- and reduced-price lunch program. Higher percentages of elementary students were classified as limited English proficient, but student ethnicity was relatively stable across school levels in all districts.

Important district-level differences emerged for school diversity and school achievement. For MCISD, student characteristics were generally stable for low and high achieving schools, except, as expected, highly diverse schools had higher percentages of nonwhite students. Findings were similar for CWISD. Student characteristics were relatively stable for low and high achieving schools, however, there tended to be more limited English proficient students and economically disadvantaged students in highly diverse schools.

In UISD, dramatic differences were evident for both school diversity and school achievement. Highly diverse schools had significantly greater percentages of limited English proficient (+17 points), economically disadvantaged (+49 points), and nonwhite (+51 points) students. The same pattern was true for achievement. High percentages of students in low achieving UISD schools were limited English proficient (21 percent), economically disadvantaged (70 percent), and nonwhite (82 percent).

Table 4.3

Student Demographic Characteristics—Percentages by School Type

	School Level			Diversity[a]		Achievement[b]	
	Elem.	Middle	High	Low	High	Low	High
Mid-City ISD							
Campus N	25	8	2	12	31	20	17
Student N	15,673	6,166	4,764	6,960	21,573	16,788	11,610
LEP	6	2	3	4	4	4	6
Economically Disadv	61	41	31	47	53	54	57
African American	39	40	37	25	47	40	38
Hispanic	16	16	17	17	40	16	17
White	41	38	39	56	32	39	42
Nonwhite	59	62	61	44	68	61	58
County Wide ISD							
Campus N	29	6	2	13	29	29	6
Student N	16,220	6,455	4,371	10,529	17,860	23,252	3,328
LEP	21	9	6	9	20	17	11
Economically Disadv	68	52	31	44	72	62	54
African American	5	6	5	5	6	5	5
Hispanic	56	49	42	40	62	54	49
White	37	45	52	53	31	40	44
Nonwhite	63	55	48	47	69	60	56
Urban ISD							
Campus N	68	15	11	34	68	63	16
Student N	42,947	16,023	19,995	29,525	49,971	46,723	10,820
LEP	19	10	4	4	21	21	4
Economically Disadv	60	50	34	22	71	70	13
African American	18	18	21	8	25	24	4
Hispanic	48	45	39	21	57	56	16
White	31	35	37	68	17	18	76
Nonwhite	69	65	63	32	83	82	24

Note. Statistics based on 1998-99 AEIS reports. Percents may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
[a]Low Diversity—nonwhite is less than 55 percent; High Diversity—nonwhite is 55 percent or more.
[b]Low Achievement—accountability rating is Acceptable, Low Performing; High Achievement—accountability rating is Exemplary, Recognized.

Student Achievement. Student achievement is summarized in Table 4.4 by school type. For all districts, *TAAS* passing rates varied only slightly by school level, but there were notable school diversity and achievement trends. First, there were only small differences in average MCISD student outcomes regardless of school diversity and achievement level. Second, achievement differences were greater in CWISD; student performance, on average, was about 10 percentage points lower in highly diverse or lower achieving schools. Third, the average student passing rates in highly diverse and low-performing

UISD schools were generally about 20 percentage points lower than the comparison schools. In sum, although all districts were serving diverse populations, the achievement outcomes for nonwhite and disadvantaged students were quite different, and outcomes in some districts were strongly tied to the type of school that students attended.

Table 4.4

Student Achievement—Passing Percentages by School Type

	School Level			Diversity[a]		Achievement[b]	
	Elem.	Middle	High	Low	High	Low	High
Mid-City ISD							
Campus N	25	8	2	12	31	20	17
Student N	15,673	6,166	4,764	6,960	21,573	16,788	11,610
TAAS Reading-All	90	85	86	91	85	86	91
TAAS Math-All	88	85	75	89	83	82	91
TAAS Writing-All	89	83	89	90	83	85	91
County Wide ISD							
Campus N	29	6	2	13	29	29	6
Student N	16,220	6,455	4,371	10,529	17,860	23,252	3,328
TAAS Reading-All	82	79	84	85	77	79	91
TAAS Math-All	82	78	74	83	73	78	92
TAAS Writing-All	84	75	85	86	77	81	92
Urban ISD							
Campus N	68	15	11	34	68	63	16
Student N	42,947	16,023	19,995	29,525	49,971	46,723	10,820
TAAS Reading-All	79	75	82	92	72	73	95
TAAS Math-All	77	72	72	90	68	69	94
TAAS Writing-All	81	74	85	93	75	76	96

Note. Statistics based on 1998-99 AEIS reports—percent passing *TAAS* by subject.

[a]Low Diversity—nonwhite is less than 55 percent; High Diversity—nonwhite is 55 percent or more.

[b]Low Achievement—accountability rating is Acceptable, Low Performing; High Achievement—accountability rating is Exemplary, Recognized.

Teacher Characteristics. Additional analyses were undertaken to explore how teacher characteristics varied by school types within districts. Using 1999-2000 teacher data, a series of crosstabs were run to review teacher characteristics by campus characteristics. Findings are summarized in Table 4.5 by teacher experience, age, degree, ethnicity, gender, and annual salary. Teacher experience had five categories: beginning teachers in their first teaching year, developing teachers with 1 to 5 years experience, and veteran teachers with 6 to 10 years, 11 to 15 years, and 16 or more years experience. Teacher age was a three-category set: younger (less than 30), middle-aged (30-50), and older (greater than 50). A dichotomous ethnicity variable was created with categories for "white" and "nonwhite."

Table 4.5

Teacher Demographic Characteristics-Percentages by School Type

	School Level			Diversity[a]		Achievement[b]	
	Elem.	Middle	High	Low	High	Low	High
Mid-City ISD							
Campus N	25	8	2	12	31	20	17
Teachers N	1,039	435	449	419	1,468	1,139	759
Teacher Experience							
First year	10	9	4	10	8	8	10
1-5 years	35	41	35	35	36	36	37
6-10	19	17	18	17	19	18	18
11-15	13	10	15	14	13	13	14
16+	23	23	28	24	25	26	21
Teacher Age							
Less than 30	20	18	14	18	18	17	20
30-50	61	62	58	61	61	59	62
51+	19	20	29	22	22	24	18
Highest Degree[c]							
Bachelors	87	80	72	86	80	79	87
Masters+	13	20	24	14	18	20	13
Ethnicity							
White	81	75	79	80	79	79	79
Nonwhite	19	25	21	20	21	21	21
Male	9	30	40	14	23	27	11
Median Salary	$32,102	$29,700	$34,242	$31,200	$32,102	$32,012	$31,200
County Wide ISD							
Campus N	29	6	2	13	29	29	6
Teachers N	791	338	353	554	871	1,234	174
Teacher Experience							
First year	5	12	5	5	8	7	4
1-5 years	20	38	24	23	26	26	14
6-10	24	15	18	21	21	20	26
11-15	17	8	18	14	16	15	18
16+	34	27	36	38	30	32	39
Teacher Age							
Less than 30	10	17	6	9	11	11	6
30-50	65	61	64	65	64	64	68
51+	25	22	30	26	25	25	26
Highest Degree[c]							
Bachelors	86	85	69	80	83	81	87
Masters+	14	15	28	20	16	18	13
Ethnicity							
White	75	79	83	83	74	78	81
Nonwhite	25	21	17	17	26	22	19
Male	10	32	43	25	21	25	8
Median Salary	$34,480	$30,800	$31,470	$32,990	$31,470	$31,470	$38,344

Table 4.5 (continued)

	School Level			Diversity[a]		Achievement[b]	
	Elem.	Middle	High	Low	High	Low	High
Urban ISD							
Campus N	68	15	11	34	68	63	16
Teachers N	2,859	944	1,091	1,664	3,209	3,005	662
Teacher Experience							
First year	10	10	8	5	12	11	3
1-5 years	29	35	26	25	31	30	23
6-10	17	16	14	17	16	16	18
11-15	14	11	12	14	12	12	17
16+	32	28	40	40	30	31	39
Teacher Age							
Less than 30	18	19	14	13	20	19	12
30-50	62	61	58	63	60	60	68
51+	20	19	28	24	21	21	21
Highest Degree[c]							
Bachelors	75	74	62	69	72	72	72
Masters+	25	26	37	31	27	28	28
Ethnicity							
White	67	72	77	84	63	63	86
Nonwhite	33	28	23	16	37	37	14
Male	10	30	43	20	22	19	7
Median Salary[d]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. Statistics based on 1998-99 AEIS reports. Percents may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
[a]Low Diversity—nonwhite is less than 55 percent; High Diversity—nonwhite is 55 percent or more.
[b]Low Achievement—Accountability Rating is Acceptable, Low Performing; High Achievement—Accountability Rating is Exemplary, Recognized.
[c]Small percentages of teachers held "no degree."
[d]Salary data were omitted due to data-quality problems.

Some teacher differences were evident by school level across all districts. Beginning teachers were more likely to work in elementary or middle schools, and high-school teachers were typically more experienced. Correspondingly, elementary and middle school teachers were generally younger than their high-school peers were. Middle and high-school teachers were more likely to be male, and a higher proportion of high-school teachers had advanced degrees.

For MCISD, teacher characteristics were generally stable by school diversity and achievement, except there were higher percentages of male teachers in highly diverse and low-performing schools. In contrast, teacher characteristics varied greatly by diversity and achievement in the other two districts. Teachers in highly diverse and low achieving schools (which were generally the same schools) were typically less experienced, somewhat younger, and more ethnically diverse. In lower achieving schools, higher

proportions of teachers were male. Teacher salary differences were generally small, except in high achieving schools in CWISD. In that district, the median teacher salary in high-achieving schools ($38,344) exceeded the salary in low-achieving schools by almost $7,000.

Teacher Mobility in the Case-Study Sites

Teacher mobility was examined for the district and for school campuses. As a first step, data files from two contiguous years (i.e., 1998-99 and 1999-2000) were merged to determine the proportion of teachers who left the school district, continued teaching at the same campus, or moved to a different district campus. Next, operational definitions were created for districts and campuses as follows:

- District Level
  - Teacher Attrition = (*leavers*)
  - Teacher Retention = (*stayers + movers*)
- Campus Level
  - Teacher Turnover = (*leavers + movers*)
  - Teacher Stability = (*stayers*)

Frequency analyses were conducted to determine the district-level attrition rate (leavers) and retention rate (stayers + movers), as well as the campus-level turnover rate (leavers + movers) and stability rate (stayers) for the three case-study districts. Chi square analyses were calculated for the three districts to note if statistically significant differences existed between teacher attrition/turnover and selected school and teacher characteristics, and to determine if variations between case study districts were present.

Leavers, Movers, and Stayers

Figure 4.1 shows the proportion of leavers, movers, and stayers by district for 1999-2000. MCISD had the most stable teaching force, with the highest proportion of stayers (80 percent) and the lowest percentage of within-district movers (4 percent). A markedly higher percentage of teachers left CWISD (27 percent) compared to the other districts (16 percent, 18 percent). This extreme difference is difficult to explain, but TEA data analysts confirmed statistical accuracy. Further investigation is needed to determine why more than one-fourth of the teachers left the district.

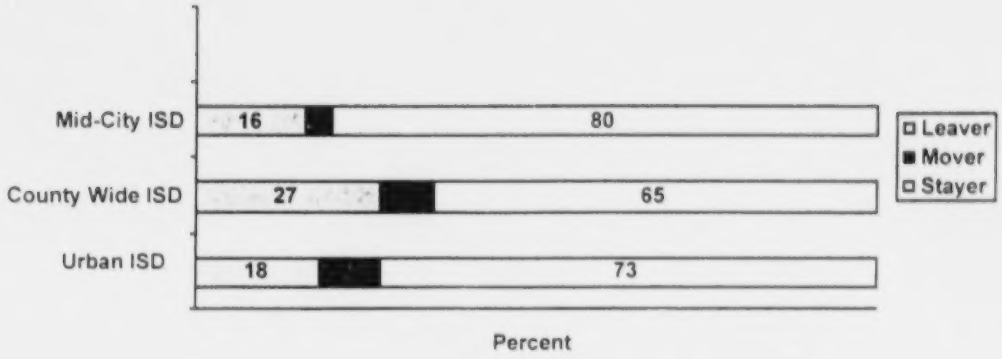

Figure 4.1. Percent of leavers, movers, and stayers by district from 1998-99 to 1999-2000.

As shown in Figure 4.2, there was little difference between the district attrition and campus turnover rates for MCISD. On the other hand, the campus turnover rate exceeded the district rate by eight percentage points for CWISD and nine points for UISD. High campus-level rates meant that between one-fourth to one-third of the teachers either left the districts or moved to different campuses.

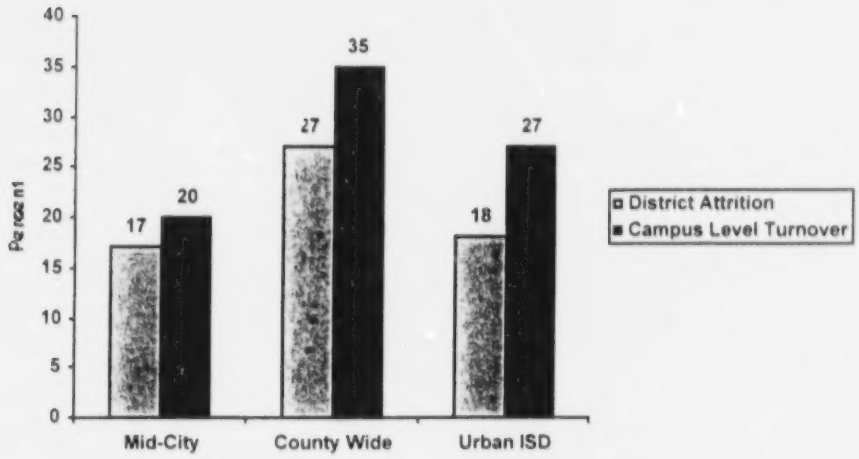

Figure 4.2. Percent of district attrition and campus level turnover by district.

District-Level Retention and Attrition

Findings presented in Table 4.6 show how teacher retention and attrition rates varied by school and teacher characteristics. Correspondingly, as reported in Table 4.7, statistical tests for associations among variables were performed using chi-square tests of significance.

Table 4.6

District-Level Retention Attrition Percentages by School and Teacher Characteristics

	Mid-City ISD			County Wide ISD			Urban ISD		
	N	RET %	ATT %	N	RET %	ATT %	N	RET %	ATT %
School Characteristics									
School Level									
Elementary	928	85	15	775	74	26	2,076	82	18
Middle	410	81	19	358	70	30	777	80	20
High	425	83	17	336	73	27	840	83	17
Diversity									
Low	376	85	15	553	78	22	1,276	87	13
High	1,390	83	17	916	70	30	2,446	80	20
Achievement									
Low	1,066	84	16	1,238	73	27	2,239	80	20
High	677	84	16	166	75	25	474	88	12
Teacher Characteristics									
Teacher Experience									
First year	175	74	26	150	53	47	330	72	28
1-5 years	616	76	24	460	56	44	1,057	73	27
6 or more years	987	90	10	866	85	15	2,373	87	13
Teacher Age									
Less than 30	347	69	31	213	50	50	620	67	33
30-50	1,052	86	14	938	76	24	2,337	85	15
51+	379	91	9	325	79	21	803	86	14
Highest Degree									
No degree	20	95	5	11	79	21	7	100	0
Bachelors	1,444	84	16	860	72	28	2,673	81	19
Masters+	314	82	18	202	78	22	1,080	85	15
Ethnicity									
White	1,192	84	16	1,167	72	28	2,674	82	18
Nonwhite	236	84	16	309	74	26	1,086	82	18
Gender									
Male	383	86	14	380	69	31	921	84	16
Female	1,395	83	17	1,096	74	26	2,839	81	19

Note. RET=Retention Rate. ATT=Attrition Rate.

Table 4.7

Chi Square Test Results of School and Teacher Characteristics by District-Level Teacher Retention Attrition

	df	MCISD X^2	CWISD X^2	UISD X^2
School Characteristics				
School Level	2	3.47	1.67	3.22
Diversity	1	0.71	11.37***	26.32***
Achievement	1	0.00	0.47	14.96***
Teacher Characteristics				
Teacher Experience	2	64.11***	168.74***	158.06***
Teacher Age	2	69.15***	64.75***	122.11***
Highest Degree	2	2.90	4.31	10.05**
Ethnicity	1	0.01	0.39	0.09
Gender	1	2.01	4.15*	3.18*

Note. *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

School Characteristics. At the campus level, teacher attrition and retention are examined according to school level, diversity of student population, and student achievement.

School level. There was little difference in teacher attrition rates by school level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high). Chi-square analyses revealed no significant school-level differences for any district.

School diversity. In CWISD and UISD, teacher attrition was significantly associated with school diversity ($X^2 = 11.37$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$ and $X^2 = 26.32$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$, respectively). Teachers in highly diverse schools in those districts were more likely to leave than were teachers at less diverse schools. Observed differences were likely related to the nature of student diversity within those districts—white/nonwhite proportions in some schools were extreme, whereas in MCISD schools were more ethnically balanced.

School achievement. For UISD, teacher attrition was strongly associated with school achievement ($X^2 = 14.96$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Teachers working at low-performing UISD campuses were more likely to leave the district (20% attrition rate) compared to teachers in high achieving schools (12 percent). In CWISD, teacher attrition rates were high for both low performing (27 percent) and high-performing campuses (25 percent).

Teacher Characteristics. The teacher characteristics considered include professional experience in the classroom, age, highest academic degree, ethnicity, and gender.

Teacher experience. Across all districts, teacher attrition rates declined incrementally as years of teaching experience increased. Chi-square analyses revealed that teacher attrition

was significantly associated with teacher experience at $p < .001$ for all districts. First-year and developing teachers (1-5 years) were more likely to leave the districts than their more experienced counterparts. In MCISD and UISD, about one-fourth of the beginning and developing teachers left, whereas in CWISD, over half of the inexperienced teachers left the district.

Teacher age. The same trend was evident for teacher age, which is highly related to teacher experience. Teachers who were less than 30 years old were significantly more likely to leave the districts ($p < .001$). From one-third to one-half of the youngest teachers left the districts.

Highest degree. The degree teachers held was not highly associated with teacher attrition, except in UISD, where a small number of teachers with *no degree* were more likely to stay.

Ethnicity. Teachers' ethnicity was not associated with teacher attrition.

Gender. Gender was not strongly associated with teacher attrition, but males in CWISD and UISD were somewhat more likely to leave the districts ($p < .05$).

Campus-Level Stability and Turnover

Findings presented in Table 4.8 show how campus-level teacher turnover and stability rates varied by school and teacher characteristics within districts. Corresponding Chi square statistical tests for associations among variables are reported in Table 4.9 by district.

School Characteristics. At the campus level, the same characteristics (school level, diversity of student population, student achievement) are considered again in examining campus stability and turnover.

School level. School level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high) was not strongly related to teacher attrition at the district level—however, there were important campus-level differences. Teacher turnover was associated with school level ($p < .05$) in all districts, and in every case, it was middle school teachers who were more likely to either leave or move to a different campus.

School diversity. School diversity was strongly associated with teacher turnover in CWISD ($X^2 = 12.14$, $df = 1$, $p < .01$) and UISD ($X^2 = 20.57$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Highly diverse campuses in those districts had markedly higher teacher turnover rates (38 percent, 29 percent, respectively)—thus, school staffs were unstable. One-fourth to one-third of the teachers left diverse schools.

School achievement. A similar teacher turnover trend was evident for school achievement (i.e., low and high). Teacher turnover was associated with school achievement in all districts, but the relationship was strongest in UISD ($X^2 = 13.60$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). High percentages of both CWISD (36 percent) and UISD (29 percent) teachers left low-performing campuses.

Table 4.8

Campus-Level Stability and Turnover by School and Teacher Characteristics

	Mid-City ISD			County Wide ISD			Urban ISD		
	N	STA %	TRN %	N	STA %	TRN %	N	STA %	TRN %
School Characteristics									
School Level									
Elementary	928	81	19	775	66	34	2,076	73	27
Middle	410	75	25	358	58	42	777	69	31
High	425	81	19	336	70	30	840	79	21
Diversity									
Low	376	81	19	553	71	29	1,276	79	21
High	1,390	79	21	916	62	38	2,446	71	29
Achievement									
Low	1,066	78	22	1,238	64	36	2,239	72	28
High	677	81	19	166	72	28	474	80	20
Teacher Characteristics									
Teacher Experience									
First year	175	70	30	150	42	58	330	64	36
1-5 years	616	72	28	460	48	52	1,057	63	37
6 or more years	987	86	14	866	78	22	2,373	79	21
Teacher Age									
Less than 30	347	64	36	213	43	57	620	58	42
30-50	1,052	82	18	938	67	33	2,337	75	25
51+	379	88	12	325	75	25	803	80	20
Highest Degree									
No degree	20	95	5	7	79	21	14	86	14
Bachelors	1,444	80	20	2,673	64	36	1,202	72	28
Masters+	315	77	23	1,080	69	31	260	77	23
Ethnicity									
White	1,428	79	21	1,167	65	35	2,674	74	26
Nonwhite	350	80	20	309	65	35	1,086	72	28
Gender									
Male	383	80	20	380	61	39	921	76	24
Female	1,395	79	21	1,096	67	33	2,839	72	28

Note. STA=Stability Rate. TRN=Turnover Rate.

Table 4.9

Chi Square Test Results of School and Teacher Characteristics By Campus-Level Teacher Stability Turnover

	df	MCISD X^2	CWISD X^2	UISD X^2
School Characteristics				
School Level	2	7.46*	12.14**	20.57***
Diversity	1	0.93	11.02**	27.25***
Achievement	1	2.15*	3.45*	13.60***
Teacher Characteristics				
Teacher Experience	2	60.86***	160.50***	142.75***
Teacher Age	2	71.67***	61.17***	92.38***
Highest Degree	2	3.84	2.97	11.76**
Ethnicity	1	0.18	0.01	1.22
Gender	1	0.14	4.45*	5.54*

Note. *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Teacher Characteristics. The same set of teacher characteristics (professional experience in the classroom, age, highest academic degree, ethnicity, gender) is used again to consider campus stability and turnover.

Teacher experience. Across all districts, teacher experience was a strong predictor of teacher turnover. Chi-square tests showed statistically significant associations for all districts at $p < .001$. In CWISD, astonishingly, 58 percent of the first-year teachers either moved to another campus or left the district. First-year teacher turnover percentages were somewhat lower for MCISD and UISD (30% and 36 percent, respectively). Teacher turnover rates declined dramatically when teachers had more than six years teaching experience. Overall, high percentages of beginning and developing teachers either left the districts or moved to different campuses.

Teacher age. The same trend was evident by teacher age. Teachers who were less than 30 years old were significantly more likely to leave the districts or their assigned campuses ($p < .001$).

Highest degree. Teachers' degree was not significantly associated with teacher turnover, except in UISD, where teachers with *no degree* were less likely to move.

Ethnicity. Teachers' ethnicity was not associated with teacher turnover.

Gender. Gender was not strongly associated with teacher turnover, but males were move likely to leave their campuses in CWISD and females were somewhat more prone to move in UISD.

Summary

Findings from the quantitative analysis revealed important factors that pose challenges for mentoring programs. Foremost, districts and schools vary greatly, so mentoring programs and practices must accommodate distinctive aspects of the school context. Evidence from this study showed that first-year and developing teachers were often assigned to highly diverse and low achieving schools. This suggests that mentoring programs, in many instances, will be challenged to help novice teachers deal with the unique needs of diverse and at-risk student populations.

Results confirmed that district-level teacher attrition is, indeed, a significant problem, and teacher experience is significantly associated with attrition. Between one-fourth to one-half of the beginning and developing teachers left the districts. Teacher mobility is an even more critical problem at the campus level. Campus-level teacher turnover rates, which ranged from 30 percent to 58 percent for first-year teachers, suggested that many schools, particularly middle schools, diverse campuses, and low-performing schools, must continually induct new and inexperienced teachers. Such schools will have difficulty building supportive, collaborative cultures and human resources to support high-quality mentoring for beginning teachers. In those schools, support may be needed from external sources.

Some evidence suggested that a school district's policies and procedures regarding the assignment of beginning teachers might intensify or lessen the teacher attrition/turnover problem. Results for one district showed that teacher turnover rates were considerably lower when schools were ethnically balanced, had equitable percentages of at-risk students, and blended beginning, developing, and veteran teachers. It also seems likely that mentoring programs will be more effective when such supportive conditions exist.

In the final chapter of this report (Chapter Six), conclusions and implications drawn from these findings are incorporated with learnings from the two other research strands.

Chapter Five

Lessons from the Field:

Case Studies of Three Districts

Robert W. Glover

Sue E. Mutchler

In order to gain a qualitative look at existing Texas mentoring programs implemented at the district and school levels, researchers conducted interviews with individuals who hold diverse perspectives of local mentoring activities, including mentor and novice teachers, school administrators, and district staff. As described in the preceding chapter of this report, mentoring programs in three school districts served as case studies for this effort.

This fieldwork provided a richer understanding of how mentoring for beginning teachers occurs in practice. In so doing, the information and ideas offered by thoughtful practitioners during their personal interviews informed the answers to two of SEDL's three research questions. Profiles of the three case study districts, beginning on page 64, add important detail to the data based picture painted in Chapter Three. Together, they answer the first question, "How have schools and districts planned and implemented mentoring programs?" The first-hand experiences of beginning teachers and the school staff who work closely with them bring to life the day-to-day operation of mentoring programs, which SEDL intended to capture through its second research question, "What are characteristics of district or school mentoring programs in the state?" Finally, although the case studies revealed that these three sites are only minimally addressing beginning teachers' needs relative to working with increasingly diverse student populations (the focus of SEDL's third research question), this finding clearly points to implications for the continued development of mentoring programs in the state of Texas.

In total, researchers conducted individual interviews and focus groups with approximately 100 teachers and 40 administrative and instructional staff in 20 schools across the three districts. Teachers were interviewed from all levels of schooling—elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools—and across numerous academic disciplines and areas of specialization. Among the non-teaching staff, approximately 20 were school administrators, 15 had key roles at the school site in the mentoring program (primarily, instructional specialists or lead mentor contacts), and 6 were central office administrators responsible for district-wide activities associated with beginning teacher mentoring.

After describing the methodology used for the three case studies, this chapter offers a "profile" of the first year teaching experience developed as a result of comparing and contrasting themes that emerged across interviews and field notes. Following this section, each school district is described in terms of the key features of its mentoring program, such as program structure and resources. Finally, a set of cross-cutting findings are presented to highlight four key areas schools and districts might consider carefully as they work to create and implement sound mentoring programs for their beginning teachers.

Methodology

Three school districts with established and active mentoring programs were selected for this field study. In this report these districts are referred to by the following pseudonyms: Urban ISD, County Wide ISD, and Mid-City ISD. Administrators in each of these districts strongly believe in mentoring and in providing professional development to educators. Each of these districts began mentoring programs for beginning teachers in the

early 1990s, and staff have taken a persistent interest in developing and improving mentoring for new teachers. Each district also has a highly diverse student population.

Although the districts selected for study provide some geographic distribution and some variety in size, time and resources limited the number to only three districts. The cases, therefore, are not meant to be representative of mentoring activities in the state. The district site selection process is described in detail on page 38 of the previous chapter. Briefly, researchers considered existing district-level data and mail survey results and then consulted external advisors to identify three districts with diverse student populations that also have established mentoring programs.

Central office staff who administer the mentoring initiatives in each district selected the schools researchers visited. They were not selected randomly. Indeed, since we were seeking established mentoring initiatives, we naturally were referred to schools that appeared to have the most effective mentoring efforts offered in the district.

Site Visit Protocol. Researchers discussed and developed site visit protocols with the cooperation of each selected district or school. School and district personnel also assisted in identifying appropriate interview subjects and in scheduling interviews during site visits.

Data Collection. Data were collected from case sites through individual and/or group interviews and document review. The individuals selected as key respondents varied from site to site and depended on such factors as size and scope of mentoring activities, existence and availability of staff assigned to mentoring program administration, and number of active mentors and beginning teachers. Interview guides were developed to facilitate data collection. Structured, open-ended questions were used as well as formats that yielded quantifiable information such as cost, program activities, duration, and number of mentors and proteges.

Recording and Transcription. Researchers recorded interviews manually and through audio recording. Transcription of audiotapes was performed on selected interviews; however, manual field notes served as the primary data record used for analysis.

Analysis. Researchers used both qualitative methods, such as content analysis, and analysis of quantifiable information to elicit detailed descriptive information on mentoring activities in each of the sites.

Document Collection. Relevant documentation about mentoring policies and activities at each of the case sites was obtained from school and district staff. Documentation was used to clarify information gained from interviews and to corroborate researchers' understanding of local policies and procedures with regard to teacher mentoring.

The First Year of Teaching: A Profile

The most striking impression one receives in interviews with new teachers is the wide variety of individual circumstances, ages, backgrounds, and paths through which they came to teaching. In Texas, the opportunity to enter teaching through alternative certification programs as well as traditional college and university-based programs has broadened the diversity of new teachers' preparation. As a result, there is considerable variety in the extent to which they have had exposure to classroom practice in some form or other prior to their first year as professional teachers.

Perhaps the diversity among new teachers can best be demonstrated by describing a few of the individual teachers researchers interviewed. Names of these teachers have been changed to preserve anonymity.

Linelle graduated from a teacher education program that provides its students three semesters of classroom experience before full-time student teaching. To be certified in early childhood education, she student taught for six weeks in kindergarten followed by another six weeks in second grade. Despite these many experiences in other teachers' classrooms, Linelle is finding management a challenge in her own classroom. She commented, "when you're student teaching, the teacher has it all set up for you."

Jim and *Susan* are newly married, first year teachers at the same middle school. In addition to teaching eighth grade language arts and mathematics, respectively, they each teach an athletics course and coach. Susan graduated from a major Texas university with certification as an elementary education teacher. As part of her teacher education program, Susan gained classroom experience through observations and student teaching. Jim graduated from the same university with a degree in English. Although he took four or five education courses, which included classroom observations, he decided to graduate without student teaching. As a result, Susan is fully certified, and Jim was hired on an emergency certificate. Next summer he plans to begin work toward full certification via a "deficiency plan" through another university. While still in college, Jim and Susan both gained classroom experience working as substitute teachers in local middle and high schools. Even with their various field experiences, Jim and Susan reported that they are spending an extraordinary amount of time beyond the typical workday and week at school. Their mentors expressed concern that this pace could place them at risk of "burning out."

Roberto has a business undergraduate degree in strategic management. After college graduation, he worked for three years as manager of a discount retail superstore before deciding to enter the teaching field. He received a teachers' license through an Alternative Certification program and is now in his second year of teaching remedial mathematics to 10th graders. Roberto indicated his first teaching year was not a bad experience, saying he was used to working hard and required little assistance from his mentor.

Jane earned a double bachelors degree in biology and elementary education. Next summer, she plans to begin taking course work toward a master's degree in education. Jane did her student teaching in a second grade classroom in the same district that hired her, but just before the school year began she was offered a sixth grade position. With no prior experience with upper elementary students, Jane was feeling the stress of planning lessons with unfamiliar curriculum.

In the midst of this diversity, interviews with first-year teachers, veteran mentor teachers, and school admin: rators yielded a rather consistent picture of the beginning teacher experience. Three themes emerged as characteristic of how new teachers and their schools grapple with this critical transitional period into the profession.

Theme 1: Overwhelmed

"Overwhelming" was by far the most common term used to describe the experience of the first year of teaching by nearly everyone. New teachers find themselves inundated with unfamiliar responsibilities and overwhelmed by their students, by paperwork, by lesson planning, by the flood of information they suddenly receive about detailed school district and campus procedures, and occasionally by the load of professional development training they are required to take. As one teacher mentor claimed, "survival is your objective the first year." Another explained: "Every day is a new day and you don't know what is ahead of you."

Rachel, a second-year teacher of middle school social studies, acknowledged that her first year was tough. She did not have a classroom, but instead was a "travelling" teacher who taught in other teachers' assigned classrooms during their planning and preparation periods. She reports that her initial reaction to teaching was, "Oh my gosh, I can't possibly do this for the rest of my life! You feel like you are drowning."

Mentors and other teachers in Susan and Jim's school were seeking ways to ease their burden of being overwhelmed during the first few weeks of school. Susan's mentor helped her stock and organize the cart that is her "classroom" as a traveling teacher. Jim receives assistance with lesson planning from both his mentor, who teaches language arts at a different grade level, and the school's instructional specialist, who was a veteran English teacher before she left classroom teaching. Most importantly, colleagues urge Susan and Jim to "take at least one day during the weekend in which you do *nothing* related to school."

Theme 2: First Things First

The needs driving new teacher concerns and the bulk of mentoring assistance early in the year cluster in two particular areas: classroom management and school procedures. New teachers and mentors interviewed by researchers identified *classroom management*, including both organization and student discipline, as the most common area of concern. In talking about her struggles with managing a class full of first graders, Linelle said "when I first started, it was like, oh my goodness, how am I going to teach these kids if I can't get them to sit down and be quiet?"

At the other end of the age continuum, Alonda encountered the same challenges in her first-year experience with high school English students: "The content area was no problem—all I really needed to work on was the discipline. Being consistent, like I am with my own child, in the classroom." Now in her fourth year of teaching at the same school, Alonda talked about the perspective she now shares with beginning teachers:

> The kids are already set up for me versus you. And that's teenage, that's adolescence. ... [I tell them] We want you to learn. I want you to graduate. I want you to pass. I will hunt you down when you're not in my class. But I say it's because I love you. And I want you to do well and you can't do well if you're not here. So I tell them I'm selfish. I want you for 90 minutes a day and that's what I'm going to have.

Among the educators interviewed, there appears to be consensus that creating the classroom teaching and learning environment is the first step to a successful year. The new teacher must be prepared and comfortable in that environment in order to provide students the structure they need to be confident and secure as learners. There also is general agreement that few beginning teachers, even those who enjoyed the best possible student teaching experience, are prepared to carry out this feat on their own.

The second need that drives new teachers' concerns early in the school year is simply their naivete regarding "the way we do things around here," that is, *school and district procedures*. They require immediate and frequent support from veteran faculty and staff as they become familiar with district-level policies and with the campus culture and standard procedures. Rachel said her mentor seemed to be very aware of her need for support in this area. During inservice training sessions at the very beginning of school, "We sat together ... [and] she would whisper to me, 'This is important' or 'This is not so important.'" Once school began, Rachel found that her first and last classes were taught in the room directly across from her mentor's classroom, so they saw one another daily. Her mentor was highly organized and tried to answer all her questions as they arose, many concerning administrative procedures and school policies.

Finally, lesson planning can offer significant challenges for teachers with no experience in the subject or grade level. Jane had a mentor who was responsive and genuinely helpful in answering questions about school policies and procedures—telling her where to obtain textbooks and order school supplies and how to fill out attendance reports appropriately. But Jane's sixth grade team did not work together at all on curriculum and instruction. After struggling through the first few weeks, Jane got some help from a most surprising source. One Saturday, while shopping with her husband, they bumped into his third-grade teacher whom he had not seen for several years. In the ensuing conversation, Jane related that she was a new 6th grade teacher and having difficulties. The following Monday, her husband's former teacher contacted the 6th grade team at her own elementary school, and they quickly compiled a stack of lesson plans and curriculum ideas for Jane. They even made for her a copy of a computer disk full of sample 6th grade lesson plans.

Theme 3: A Mentoring Culture

In schools exhibiting a fertile climate of professional development, first-year teachers appear to gain support from teaching colleagues in addition to (or sometimes even instead of) a single, formally assigned mentor. In such situations, much additional informal mentoring and collaboration takes place among instructional-level team members and teachers who teach in the same academic area. Proteges may be mentored also by different teachers according to the particular domains of practice—for example, one colleague may have special skills in classroom management while another is very helpful with lesson planning.

The following examples illustrate the different ways in which schools researchers visited bring their human and other resources to bear on creating a mentoring culture to support new teachers. The school-wide components of each campus approach, as a result, extend the benefits of mentoring to many other members of the faculty. Names of the schools are withheld to preserve anonymity.

School A. In this elementary school, the philosophy and practice of mentoring is integrated into the school's implementation of a district-wide initiative—a comprehensive effort to transform the district into a model district actively engaged in the practices of a "high-performance learning community." Beginning teachers at School A are not assigned individual mentors. Instead, individual veteran teachers are asked to work with one or another new teacher on a particular task or activity, according to their particular expertise or experience in that area.
Two staff specialists, a second source of mentoring support, work with both new and veteran teachers individually and in small groups. The first, a school-based instructional specialist, is considered by the principal a "master mentor teacher" who provides a full array of assistance to any teacher in the form of model teaching, co-teaching, resource acquisition, and more. The second, a literacy specialist who is on campus one day a week, uses a peer coaching approach to provide assistance in the area of literacy, which is a special curriculum focus across the school district. She provides mentoring to individual teachers and also works with groups of teachers through dialogue about instructional strategies and hands-on materials development.

A third source of mentoring for the entire faculty comes in the form of group meetings led by the principal and instructional specialist. Weekly grade level (horizontal) team meetings and subject area-based (vertical) cadre meetings serve as mini-staff development sessions.

School B. In this middle school, all new teachers are assigned an individual mentor. According to the principal, the goal for the relationship is "similar to what we want to achieve in student advisory [arrangements]: to have a person a new teacher feels comfortable coming to with any problem." If at all possible, a beginning teacher is matched with a veteran teacher who teaches the same academic subject. This personal mentor contacts his or her protégé as early as possible in the summer before school, to get acquainted. From the first day of the school year to the last, the mentor provides day-to-

day support in key areas of materials acquisition, classroom management, and curriculum and instruction. One of the new teachers this year is a traveler. Although this situation has its drawbacks, her teaching schedule includes a block class (two-periods in length) in her mentor's classroom. As a result, her mentor is potentially available every day during this time (which is her planning and preparation period) to observe or assist the protégé. Another protégé is informally observed two or three times a week during his mentor's conference period.

Scheduling time and allocating classroom space are used in School B to facilitate a second source of mentoring through regular, focused opportunities for other teachers to interact with beginning staff. Classroom assignments are clustered to create grade-level hallways, and grade-level teams have a common lunch period. The grade-level team, which shares most if not all of the same students, also has a common planning and preparation period. In the opinion of this year's new teachers, the grade-level team actually is proving to play a greater role in their support than the academic departments. Overall, the strong team structure facilitates regular interaction between the beginning teacher and veteran faculty and allows for cross-team cooperation on behalf of individual students.

A campus-based instructional specialist is a third source of mentoring support to all new teachers. In addition to coordinating campus participation in any centralized mentoring activities (documentation of mentoring, mentor attendance at the district-provided training session), the campus instructional specialist meets weekly with each new teacher. The content of the meetings varies according to teacher needs, ranging from acquainting them with campus initiatives relevant to their teaching area, to assisting with lesson planning, to providing organizing tips.

Finally, a school-wide faculty study program engages all teachers in reading, discussing, and applying the ideas presented in a current, well-regarded book on education. Discussions take place weekly by teaching team and, once a month, in a whole-faculty meeting. The principal and instructional specialist believe that, in addition to serving as a collaborative professional development strategy, the faculty study program creates a common bond between the mentor and protégé as they study together. Furthermore, the program "sets a climate and tone so that new teachers can approach anyone on the campus" with a question or a problem.

Profiles of Mentoring in the School Districts Studied

The chart on the following pages summarizes key features of the mentoring programs in each of the three school districts in which researchers conducted fieldwork. A narrative description of the activities within these districts follows the chart.

Table 5.1

Key Features of Mentoring Programs in Case Study Districts

Program feature	Urban ISD	County Wide ISD	Mid-City ISD
New teacher training	Prior to start of school year, two (2) days new teacher induction, including: • orientation to district by district staff • information fair • work with peers and master teacher at same grade level and/or area of specialization • orientation to home campus by campus staff.	Prior to start of school year: • One (1) day district orientation. • One (1) day at home campus with mentor. During school year: • One day of technology training. • One-half day of training on the Texas Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) for teachers. • Weekly half-hour television series.	Eight (8) day, new teacher induction year program. Prior to start of school year: • Four (4) days training, including overview of state and district programs and procedures by district staff and half day on home campus with mentor. During school year: • Three (3) days additional training by district staff during first semester. • One (1) day observation of a master teacher on home campus or at another school.
Mentor training	• All lead mentor teacher contacts receive two (2) days of training. They each then train the mentors on their campus. • Training is provided through district educator development office.	• Two (2) days of training for lead mentors. • Weekly mentor television series.	• Four (4) hours training for all mentors every three years. Provided by instructional specialists, mentor training is offered during summer on 15 designated campuses and addresses district- and school-level issues. • During "off" years, mentors choose from array of supplemental training sessions (e.g., conflict resolution, resiliency, adult learning).

Program feature	Urban ISD	County Wide ISD	Mid-City ISD
New teacher compensation	District participates in teacher induction and mentoring program funded through Regional Education Service Center by the TxBESS pilot. District uses these funds for teacher stipends, substitutes, and supplies for the four (4) schools participating in Project TIM.	No special arrangements.	$1500 bonus for new teachers who: • begin district service at start of school year and • successfully complete induction year program and remain with district through the school year.
Mentor compensation	2000-2001 pilot program provides: • $300 for mentoring each protégé, with up to two proteges per mentor allowable. • $300 per lead mentor teacher contact.	$250 stipend for mentoring a teacher enrolled in a Texas Alternative Certification Program (ACP).	• $450 stipend for mentoring an ACP teacher. • $350 stipend for mentoring a non-ACP teacher.
Program materials and other resources	• Substitute pay and stipends for mentors and proteges as they participate in model teaching and observation, work together after school hours, and engage in other professional development activities. • District-created mentor manual.	• Professional development guidebook provided to all mentors. • Supplemental resource materials provided to mentors throughout the school year.	• District-created mentor manual. • District-created protégé manual. • Substitute pay for protégé in order to observe master teacher (day 8 of teacher induction program).
Recognition	Left to discretion and initiative of local campus.	Year-end celebration reception.	• Convocation at beginning of school year recognizes mentors. • End-of-year reception recognizes mentors and proteges.
New teacher assessment	Assessments by master teachers in the 2000-2001 TxBESS pilot project.	• Feedback is provided to both new teachers and their mentors. • Assessments by master teachers in the 2000-2001 TxBESS pilot project.	Formative assessments (not used in connection with PDAS): • Observation at least once each semester by mentor. • Reciprocal observation between protégé and mentor once per semester. • Walk-throughs and practice observations with feedback by campus-based instructional specialist.

Table 5.1 (continued)

Program feature	Urban ISD	County Wide ISD	Mid-City ISD
Program evaluation	None at present.	Year-end evaluation survey for both mentors and induction year teachers.	• Annual evaluation of all mentoring components by mentors and proteges via focus groups. • Written surveys of mentors and proteges, reviewed by a district-wide evaluation committee composed of campus-level and district level staff.
Special staff	• Lead mentor teacher contact is designated on each campus. • Campus-based instructional or curriculum specialist on over half of the campuses, funded through special programs or at principal's discretion. This person does not have classroom teaching responsibilities.	Lead mentor contact at each campus.	Campus-based instructional specialist oversees school's mentoring program (as well as conducts other faculty professional development). This person does not have classroom teaching responsibilities.
Linkages with other entities	• Region Education Service Center for mentoring of TxBESS project teachers and ACP teacher mentoring. • Faculty of teacher preparation programs at two nearby state universities.	• Region Education Service Center. • Faculty of teacher preparation program at a nearby state university.	• Region Education Service Center and faculty of ACP program at a nearby state university for ACP teacher mentoring.

Urban ISD

Urban ISD is one of the largest urban school districts in Texas. In 1998-99, the district had nearly 80,000 students and more than 100 campuses. At that time, over 60 percent of the student population was of ethnic and language minority background, and half of the students were economically disadvantaged. Urban ISD leaders are in the midst of implementing a number of significant reforms intended to bring district-wide and system-wide cohesiveness to a focus on student learning, high quality instruction, and the concept of "learning community." The booming economy in the metropolitan area is producing an abundance of attractive job opportunities that appear to be luring teachers away from the classroom. In fall of academic year 2000, 800 teachers attended new staff orientation.

Urban ISD presently takes a decentralized approach to mentoring. From its inception in 1993, the Office of Educator Development has guided the district's teacher mentoring initiative. However, the professional development staff has been too small to implement a district-wide system of teacher mentoring. Recognizing the need for participation at the campus level, at the beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, the Director of Educator Development asked all principals at each of the campuses in Urban ISD to designate a lead mentor to serve as a campus liaison to her office. Her office then offered several training sessions for the lead mentors, and distributed selected research papers and articles on mentoring to participants to share on their campuses.

A significant factor that has handicapped Urban district staff in developing a more systematic approach to teacher mentoring has been lack of information. Staff simply has not had the data available on which to base a district-wide program. Most critically, the Office of Educator Development does not know at the beginning of the year how many novice teachers Urban ISD has hired nor in which schools they are located. Accurate numbers are not available until October of each school year. Fortunately, significant improvements in the district's technology systems are underway, and the office expects to be one of the first to benefit from ready access to both teacher and student population statistics.

Urban ISD currently depends on local campus leaders to recognize or reward the effort of mentors. Except for teachers in four schools participating in the TxBESS pilot through the nearby Regional Education Service Center, the district does not yet pay a stipend to its mentors. The district relies heavily on the voluntary efforts of teacher mentors at the campus level. Via a train-the-trainer approach, the Office of Educator Development trains each lead mentor teacher who, in turn, is expected to transfer these skills to all the mentors who work with beginning teachers on his/her campus.

The new Director of Educator Development is moving quickly to begin putting together the diverse pieces of a district-wide approach to teacher development. Nearly 60 of the district's schools have on-campus instructional specialists or other non-teaching staff member who are devoted to teacher support and instructional improvement on that campus. This cadre of educators is actively building capacity for ongoing professional development across the district. The director also is working with her second cohort of teachers preparing for certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards; these 14 join 18 others who are in their second year of development toward certification. Urban ISD pays the examination fee, supports monthly cohort meetings, provides substitute pay, and is beginning to advertise the opportunity more widely through the Office of Teacher Development course catalog.

County Wide ISD

County Wide ISD covers the entire county, including a mid-size city. In 1998-1999, the school district had an enrollment of over 28,000 students. The student population is approximately 40 percent white and 60 percent ethnic minority, and over half of the students were economically disadvantaged. Historically, the area has been heavily

dependent on the oil industry, which has exhibited an unstable employment pattern responding to world oil prices. The city's population in the 1990 census numbered 95,700. It has fallen to an estimated 85,000 since then. As families have moved away to seek their livelihood elsewhere, student enrollment has declined and staff turnover has been larger than average. The city is trying to diversity its economy now; but it is a difficult task. Recruiting teachers to come to the area is often difficult. County Wide ISD has found the most success in targeting their recruitment efforts to folks who have grown up in the region, who left the area to attend college or get a job somewhere else, and want to "return home."

County Wide ISD has been officially trying to organize, encourage, and guide the mentoring of new teachers since 1990 when the present Director of Professional Development assumed her duties. The approach to mentoring new teachers used in County Wide ISD has evolved and improved significantly over time. The first efforts were more of an informal "buddy system." Next, the director tried to place teacher mentoring responsibility on principals, soliciting them to identify mentors. The results were spotty; some principals did an excellent job while others made little effort. In short, results were highly variable in this totally decentralized mode. This phase lasted about two years, when surveys of induction-year teachers revealed that they needed and wanted more help.

Administration of the mentoring program has shifted during various reorganizations of the central district office. Begun in the Office of Professional Development, oversight of teacher mentoring and all other professional development was moved to the Department of Human Resources in 1994. Although an Office of Professional Development was established once again in 1997, mentoring remained the responsibility of Human Resources until fall 1998. At that time, the mentoring program again came under the purview of the Office of Professional Development, where it has remained since.

In 1998, the professional development office placed a staff member in charge of mentoring and she established a network of "lead mentors" at each of its 42 campuses. The principal on each campus was asked to select an individual who would serve as liaison to the district office and who would supervise the novice teacher mentoring function on the campus. Teachers were invited to apply for the job of lead mentor, and the principal was to select the lead mentor from among those who volunteered. District staff held a two-day training session for the lead mentors in 1999-2000.

Several innovations have been piloted in County Wide ISD over the past decade. Some have worked well; others not so well. For example, County Wide ISD has made at least one attempt to engage the participation of a nearby post-secondary educational institution in supporting novice teachers. Since its establishment, this branch of the University of Texas has become a resource for the preparation of teachers. The relationship with County Wide ISD, however, does not seem to have quite "clicked" yet. The novice teacher project, conducted in 1998, was judged as unsuccessful in part because it was based on organizing groups of teachers across schools. Further, it relied on graduate students to convene the groups. The level of effectiveness varied considerably across the groups. Some groups were quite active and successful. Others did not meet at all. Also, a "grow your own teachers" program, begun by County Wide ISD in 1994 to encourage high school students to consider entering the teaching profession, was abandoned in

Spring 1999 because a program evaluation revealed insufficient return on the investment the district was making.

In a current innovation, County Wide ISD is participating in a TxBESS pilot project with the Education Service Center in its region, which brings a selected group of retired and experienced teachers into classrooms to observe novice teachers in action. In a debriefing session, the experienced observer provides constructive criticism in a meeting with both the novice and to his/her mentor.

Mid-City ISD

Mid-City ISD is located in the central region of Texas. In 1998-99, the district served over 28,000 students on 43 campuses. The student population is diverse, with the 1998-99 ethnic composition including 60 percent ethnic minority and 40 percent White. About half of the students were economically disadvantaged (51 percent), while only a small proportion (5 percent) was limited English proficient. The community is affected by its relatively mobile population, which brings an influx of teachers and students into and out of the school system.

Mid-City ISD began a formal induction program for teachers new to the district in 1984. The program has evolved over time into its present form as a highly organized program, involving eight (8) full days of training. Four of the training days occur in a block before classes begin each Fall and Spring semester. The training provides new teachers with an introduction to Texas state education requirements and features, including the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) accountability system, the Professional Development Appraisal System (PDAS). Further, the training provides an overview of the Mid-City District's philosophy, procedures, and current educational initiatives. The training also includes a video introduction Harry Wong's "The First Day of School," a training package especially designed to assist novice teachers to prepare for the first day of class. The training is conducted by a team of experienced instructors and provided for the District as a whole. On the final afternoon of this four-day block of training prior to the start of school, new teachers spend on the campus where they will be teaching and they meet their mentor teachers, who show them around and introduce them to the school. Through this technique, Mid-City's mentoring system is integrated with the induction training program for teachers new to the district.

The new teacher induction year training program includes three additional days of training after classes begin. During the eighth day of the program, new teachers observe a master teacher at another school. Substitute teachers are arranged and paid for by the District Professional Development Office. Upon successful completion of the eight day program, new teachers who remain with the district through the school year earn a $1,500 bonus.

The Mid-City ISD district undertakes other important roles in the mentoring program for new teachers. The district pays all mentors an annual stipend of $350. To qualify for the stipend, mentors must participate each year in a four-hour training for mentors offered by the district and they must fill out and submit a series of paperwork assignments to the

District Professional Development office. The required paperwork includes checklists and a brief diary of meetings held with the protégé, summarizing the issues discussed at each. One observation by the mentor of each protégé teaching must be conducted each semester. Written evaluations of mentor training and the mentoring program also must be submitted.

In addition to funding stipends and providing mentor training, the Mid-City school district provides other resources and assistance to promote high quality mentoring. A manual for mentors offers guidance toward establishing a good working relationship with protégés and providing help at critical points during the year. The manual also includes the forms to be completed and submitted to the District Staff Development Office as documentation for mentor stipend payment. Each protégé also is provided a manual, designed with the beginning teacher in mind. When requested, district staff often suggest master teachers on other campuses a protege can observe. Further, they serve as back-up resource staff to assist mentors with problems or issues that the mentors cannot handle.

The District recognizes its mentors by printing their names in the program for a staff convocation held at the beginning of the year and, in the spring, with a recognition reception for mentors and their proteges. At both of the se events, the Superintendent participates and personally thanks mentors for their efforts. The spring reception also includes small, structured focus groups in which mentors are encouraged to provide feedback on the mentoring program and to suggest improvements. The Mid-City ISD mentoring program is in a state of "continuous improvement" based on this and other feedback it receives each year. Participating teachers evaluate all training components. Most important, the district takes action on the basis of the feedback received. The mentoring program and all of its evaluations are reviewed by Professional Development staff and also by a special District Evaluation Committee composed of knowledgeable campus-based individuals, including a new teacher.

An Instructional Specialist on each of the 43 campuses in Mid-City serves as a lead mentor as part of his/her role. The activity level of the Instructional Specialist varies significantly by campus. Some perceive their role as "lead mentor" mainly as an administrative function—collecting and reviewing the required paperwork required of mentors and submitting it to the District Professional office to trigger payment of stipends at the end of the year. Other Instructional Specialists get more involved, providing some of the mentoring themselves, and arranging for meetings with mentors and new teachers, and other activities.

Cross-Cutting Findings

The educators whose voices informed these case studies represent just a small fraction of the many teachers and administrators serving Texas' students. They hail from various parts of the state, work under different cultural and organizational circumstances, and clearly are engaged in their own unique approaches to meeting the needs of first-year teachers. Despite these differences, some generalizations from the experiences they shared with SEDL researchers seem reasonable and appropriate.

First and foremost, individual new teachers have different needs and preferences to which their mentors must adjust. A rigidly uniform approach to mentoring will not suit the needs of all novices. This was clearly illustrated by the testimony of the first experienced mentor we interviewed. She noted that, unlike her protégé last year, who was strongly independent and preferred receiving little assistance, her protégé this year was more "needy."

Second, even in school districts and campuses with good mentoring systems, researchers found new teachers who were "falling through the cracks." Desperate new teachers who do not receive the help they need from their official mentors naturally try to reach out to others. They seek help from fellow teachers teaching the same subjects, from family members who are teachers, and even teachers they meet while shopping at the local grocery store. Fortunately, most fellow teachers usually respond to requests for assistance; after all, teaching is a "helping profession."

There is a need, however, for some form of non-threatening appeal process through non-authority channels for beginning teachers to use to ensure they gain the help and support they need. Many new teachers feel vulnerable and some have difficulty asking for help or admitting their problems to anyone—especially to those in authority or to individuals they do not trust. They think, "I should know this," and fear exposing their weaknesses to fellow teachers and administrators. The task is made easier when mentors model the desired behavior, disclosing their own mistakes and acknowledging weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

The Aims of Mentoring

We did not find total agreement among respondents about the aims of mentoring, but the aims given tend to cluster around a few objectives:

- To ease the transition into the profession for new teachers to improve and encourage their retention in teaching,
- To improve the quality of teachers,
- To foster career development,
- To improve schools.

A few respondents pointed out that the purpose of mentoring did not include making sure all teachers are retained—only good teachers. Some induction-year teachers should leave the profession because teaching is not an appropriate career for them.

In sum, good mentoring can have beneficial effect on improving the retention of new teachers in their jobs; but retaining all teachers—whether good or bad—should not be the primary goal of mentoring. Fostering the development of high quality teachers and effective teaching are more important aims of mentoring.

Roles and Responsibilities

There is no "single best way" to organize or structure the mentoring process; but there may be common principles for achieving success in this endeavor. There are important roles for state, district, and campus-level administrators in fostering good mentoring. Any good mentoring system needs to have a presence at both the district and the campus levels.

Across all three districts and all school levels, teachers and administrators voiced the need to address these "first things first" needs as soon as possible. The first official week of school for teaching staff—typically just a week or so before students arrive—is too late. Beginning teachers need to be assigned and have access to their classrooms well before the date experienced staff arrive. They should have in-hand instructor's versions of the textbooks and other instructional materials required for each of their assigned courses. In addition, selected practical professional development courses might be offered prior to the start of school to give these beginners a head start on their first year.

Finally, during the first few weeks of school, time is especially short for all teachers and the pressures are great. For first-year teachers, as a principal observed, "The most precious resource during this period is time—not funding. If we could figure a way to give new teachers an extra 24 hours each day, it would help more than anything else!"

The Content of Mentoring

The issues most commonly addressed by mentors who work with beginning teachers include:

- Classroom management (including student discipline),
- District and campus procedures (especially important during the first few days of school),
- Emotional support and assurance.

The questions and issues that mentors and proteges most commonly address in their interactions are generally the same across levels of schooling (i.e., elementary, middle school and high school), but the answers differ by level of school.

Special Challenges to Mentoring

From information collected in our interviews with campus personnel, we identified several factors that present special challenges to mentoring. For example, new teachers trained out of state often are unfamiliar with the Texas K-12 student assessment and school accountability system. Other examples of special challenge to mentors and mentoring systems, as well as the new teachers themselves, include:

- being hired late,

- taking over classes in mid-academic year,
- teaching at a school that uses unique or innovative instructional approaches (with which the teacher has little experience or prior preparation),
- teaching in a subject or grade level in which the new teacher had no contact or field preparation,
- being a travelling teacher without one's own classroom or being assigned to an isolated portable classroom, and
- teaching in a school with a high proportion of new teachers.

The Broader Context: Mentoring As Part of a Larger Picture

This research began as a study of one-on-one mentoring arrangements; but it did not take many visits to schools to see that one-on-one mentoring was only a part of the full picture of successful teacher induction and development. Schools with the best mentoring programs do much more than establish official mentors. As an elementary school principal from Urban ISD explained, "We all mentor one another here."

In short, a good environment of mentoring generally involves more than one mentor. New teachers learn from a variety of peers. Good mentoring involves a variety of formal and informal contacts. An important task for the campus principal is building an environment that fosters such interaction and cooperation.

Teacher mentoring thrives in collaborative school environments. Mentoring is especially fostered through effective teaming arrangements, whether by grade level or academic discipline. Other collaborative practices that tend to build an environment that facilitates mentoring include the following:

- Emphasis on building a collaborative school climate from campus leaders. This can take various forms and employ various means.
- A participatory process for hiring new teachers.
- A teacher appraisal system that rewards collaborative activity.
- An accountability system that gives greater emphasis to accountability for teams of teachers than for individual teachers.
- Group study sessions, book clubs, and other devices that promote group professional development and promote active "learning communities" at the campus.

Chapter Six

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Sue E. Mutchler

Diane T. Pan

Robert W. Glover

Kelley S. Shapley

Findings from the research presented in the preceding chapters contribute to increased understanding of teacher mentoring programs, and uncover needs, circumstances, and contexts that affect and are affected by teacher mentoring. Each of the three complementary data sources pursued for this study addresses one or more of the three research questions that SEDL sought to explore at the beginning of this investigation. This final chapter provides insights around those questions. Implications and reflections on the overall research findings also provide important policy and program recommendations and direction for future research as presented at the end of this chapter.

How Have Schools and Districts Planned and Implemented Mentoring Programs to Respond to State Policy on Teacher Induction?

Mentoring of beginning teachers in Texas is marked by considerable variation in terms of planning and implementation strategies and priorities. The Texas state policy on teacher induction provides minimal direction as to the scope of programming expected of schools and districts, and the policy is not backed by state funding or other support except for the recent time-limited TxBESS program funded by the federal government. It appears that compliance with state policy is not a major driving force for districts to develop mentoring activities for beginning teachers. Instead, other more enduring motivations, such as the desire to enhance teacher quality and the assumption that job satisfaction will lead to greater retention, are providing the impetus for the rise of teacher mentoring in the state since 1990.

As outlined below, schools and districts recognize a number of expected and actual benefits from providing teacher mentoring. Program planners at the district level and educators at the school and classroom level also are grappling with a number of challenges to successful implementation of mentoring programs.

Motivations and Challenges

This study identified two primary reasons for mentoring beginning teachers that are corroborated in current knowledge on the beneficial effects of mentoring. The first is the potential for mentoring to improve the quality of skills and knowledge of beginning teachers, thus increasing student achievement. The second is the possibility of addressing the teacher shortage program by stemming the tide of attrition of beginning teachers.

Improving the skills and knowledge of beginning teachers was the most prevalent concern among survey respondents and was the primary perceived benefit of providing teacher mentoring. As critical as the teacher attrition problem has grown in the last decade, districts and schools continue to focus on the needs of the students through teacher quality.

Many districts do, however, see mentoring as an important retention strategy; and they recognize the fact that attrition of beginning teachers contributes to teacher shortages in some areas more than in others. Teacher shortages in certain grade levels and areas of specialization were of particular concern to a large majority of statewide survey

respondents (75 percent). In addition, these districts reported that attrition contributes to increased costs for the district and negative effects on campus-level faculty and students. The analysis of administrative data revealed important findings and some troubling characteristics of teacher attrition in the three case study sites—each of which might have implications for how districts might work toward maximizing mentoring as a retention strategy:

- District teacher attrition rates masked the more troublesome campus-level teacher turnover tendencies. Variation in teacher turnover rates for individual campuses, on average, were far higher than the variation in district teacher attrition rates.[2]
- Teacher turnover rates were usually higher for middle schools, highly diverse campuses, and low-performing schools.
- Teacher attrition declined as teacher experience increased. About one-fourth to one-third of inexperienced teachers (i.e., less than 5 years experience) leave the districts. Teachers' degree, ethnicity, and gender were generally not strongly associated with teacher attrition.
- Turnover rates declined dramatically for teachers with more than six years teaching experience. Across the three districts, high percentages of first-year and developing teachers (30 percent to 58 percent) either left the districts or moved to a different campus.
- Teachers who were less than 30 years old were significantly more likely to move from one school to another. Teachers' highest degree held, ethnicity, and gender were generally unimportant factors in campus-level turnover.

Successful mentoring programs require careful planning and management, commitment from multiple levels, and sufficient financial and non-financial resources. Even with all of these components, schools and districts face a number of obstacles to successfully supporting beginning teachers.

Survey results reveal the challenges facing districts in providing a supportive structure for mentoring activities. More than half of reporting districts (52 percent) assessed their own mentoring programs as work in progress (i.e., still in the planning stages, in need of improvement, or a new and growing effort). Only 11 percent of respondents felt that their mentoring program contains a broad range of activities and positively affects all beginning teachers. Expectedly, these districts readily identify a number of needed supports. Funding for stipends and staff time for mentoring activities are the most prevalent barriers. Respondents also report that limited expertise in the area of mentoring, lack of training for mentors, and lack of state guidance and assistance create obstacles for implementing mentoring activities.

Challenges in implementing mentoring activities at the school level are diverse and depend on the local circumstances of beginning teachers. Interviews at the case sites

[2] Campus-level teacher turnover in Mid-City ISD, however, was markedly lower than the rates for County Wide ISD and Urban ISD. Mid-City ISD schools, which typically were more ethnically and socio-economically balanced and had more equitable distributions of beginning, developing, and veteran teachers, had teaching staffs that were more stable than the comparison districts.

reveal that logistical realities of school structures cause problems for effective mentoring. For example, late hires to a district or teachers that take over classes in mid-academic year create difficulty in matching new teachers to mentors. Special challenges to new teachers and mentors include:

- School-wide use of unique or innovative instructional approaches with which the beginning teacher has little or no prior preparation,
- Assignment of the new teacher to a subject or grade level in which he or she had no prior contact or field preparation, and
- The presence of many new teachers, all of whom need some degree of mentoring.

The lack of time for learning new skills and for getting or giving support is another prevalent obstacle for beginning teachers and their mentors. The most common expression of novice teachers who are teaching their own classes for the first time is "feeling overwhelmed" by their students, by lesson planning, by new responsibilities, by paperwork, and more. At this stage, time is a most precious resource.

Finally, challenges exist in the matching of beginning teachers and mentors. An appropriate match is important for a successful mentoring relationship, however, this is often difficult to achieve due to teachers' schedules and lack of time outside the classroom. In general, mentors and proteges are best matched according to academic subject and/or grade level taught, physical proximity of their classrooms, and/or common conference periods to facilitate interaction and contact. Specialized teachers often work in isolated situations (e.g., solitary new elementary school teachers in physical education or music) and often must be assisted through the engagement of their professional organizations.

What are Characteristics of District and School Mentoring Programs?

Mentoring programs in districts and schools vary widely in program philosophy, structure, resources dedicated to mentoring, and distributions of roles and responsibilities. Despite these differences, certain mentoring program features appear to be common at the district level and at the campus level across most local implementations.

District Characteristics

Districts play an important role in determining local policy regarding mentoring, overseeing and assisting with campus-based activities, and providing support such as resources and mentor training. With the exception of some of the larger ones, districts leave the primary responsibility for carrying out mentoring activities to campus administration.

Districts secure outside support for their mentoring programs in the form of financial and non-financial assistance. Regional Education Service Centers, teacher preparation programs, and state government are the most prevalent sources of outside support. As contributors of non-financial assistance to well over half of the districts SEDL queried,

service centers and teacher preparation programs may be directing much of this support through their participation in the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS) and the state's alternative teacher certification process.

Key mentoring program resources identified by district staff included time, mentor training, materials, and direct funds. Although the greatest number of districts perceive mentors' time as being a major resource in a mentoring program, districts recognize also the considerable investment of time by beginning teachers and administrative staff. Direct funds are used in over a quarter of the districts responding to SEDL's survey to provide mentor stipends and/or wages for substitute teachers who make release time possible for mentors and proteges.

Mentoring program features in SEDL's three case study sites provide a closer look at the different ways in which school districts provide direction and support to the mentoring of beginning teachers through:

- Training for both new teachers and mentors
- Incentives in the form of mentor compensation and formal recognition of mentors and proteges
- Program materials and other resources
- Evaluation through new teacher assessment and ongoing program evaluation
- Dedication of special staff and leveraging of additional assistance from entities outside the district.

School Characteristics

With sixty-five percent of Texas districts giving primary responsibility for the mentoring program to their individual campuses, school-level characteristics become particularly important to understanding the present implementation of beginning teacher mentoring across the state. As might be expected, this decentralized approach results in diversity not only within the total sample of schools included in SEDL's three case study districts but also among schools in the same district. Among the Texas schools visited by researchers, however, the focus of mentoring was reported to be remarkably consistent during the first few months of a teacher's first year in the classroom. This is true regardless of level of schooling (elementary, middle/junior high, and high school). Four overarching themes were apparent from interviews with beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and other school-based staff involved in mentoring programs.

First, *regardless of* their variation in preparation path, experience, needs, and circumstances, beginning teachers typically are **overwhelmed**.

Second, all mentoring programs at SEDL's case study sites centered on taking care of **first things first**. That is, they recognized that beginning teachers' immediate needs, not so surprisingly, are not curriculum-oriented but rather concern managing their place in the workplace itself. *Classroom management* (both classroom organization and student discipline) is the most common area of concern for new teachers. In addition, mentoring must acquaint new teachers with *school procedures* (i.e., formal and informal campus

work rules, culture, and practices and district-level policies) during the first few days of classes. Such information is best conveyed at—or preferably just prior to—the time it is needed.

Third, the power of a **mentoring culture** in the school cannot be under-emphasized. The two schools profiled in Chapter Five each use a unique mix of strategies to create a school-based structure for professional support that includes one-on-one mentoring as only part of a multi-faceted approach to inducting new teachers into the profession and fostering their development. Mentors, proteges, and administrative staff alike seem to be confident that the school structures and ways human resources are allocated "work" for them. Further, mentoring-type support is extended to all staff, in the belief that all teachers need to work with each other if they are to provide high quality instruction and contribute to improved student performance. As the principal of one school said:

> ... mentoring has to be ongoing ... the language and the craft of teaching and learning with children and ourselves is constantly developing. It doesn't stop after your first year. And you don't get it after your fifth year [or even] after you've had 20 years.

Effects of Mentoring

Survey results present a mixed picture as to the effect of mentoring on beginning teachers. When asked to identify results of mentoring using a forced-choice list of possible results improving teaching quality, job satisfaction, student achievement, and work environment all were prioritized above teacher retention. When asked separately about retention and teacher quality, however, districts recognized the prevalence of both results nearly equally. This may reflect the nature of a mentoring process that seeks to support the development of beginning teachers that might, in turn, lead to job satisfaction due to success on the job, and by extension to increased retention.

Interviews with staff of the three case study districts provide only anecdotal evidence of effectiveness. Across all schools, however, that evidence is positive. Staff assert that good mentoring can have beneficial effects on the retention of new teachers in their jobs. SEDL's key informants say they look for a turning point in the first year of every protégé—when it is evident that he or she "sees himself as important, as productive." As one mentor says, her hope is that "by the end of the year [her protégé] will feel she's accomplished something with her students and will come back next year, confident in her familiarity with the school and the curriculum." That is, the mark of successful mentoring is often viewed to simply be the return of a first year teacher to the same school as a second year teacher.

Program effectiveness in areas other than retention also is undocumented. Schools struggle with and juggle available resources as they work toward achieving the most important aims of mentoring—fostering the development of high quality teachers who stay in the profession over the long haul. The observation of an elementary school mentor exemplifies the reports of many case study participants who are witnessing good results with this mentoring goal as well. In discussing a colleague whom he mentored three years

ago, the mentor says he has shifted from asking questions primarily about curriculum to those that focus on how to approach a child who is having a learning problem. In that mentor's opinion, the beginning teacher who "started out teaching the book instead of the child" is now a strong member of the faculty.

What are the Implications of Current Mentoring Activities for the Retention of Teachers in Districts or schools with Increasingly Diverse Student Populations?

Because one research focus for this project is teacher mentoring in a context of student diversity, a critical component of the selection of the three case studies was high race/ethnic diversity of the student population. Also, to varying degrees in all three case districts, higher percentages of economically disadvantaged and limited English proficient students were found to be in the highly diverse and low-performing schools.

The challenges of preparing teachers to address the needs of all learners have long been recognized. Demographic changes in the student population are evident in the Southwest region, and in Texas non-white students comprised 56 percent of 1999 enrollments. Additionally, substantial numbers of children live in poverty, have limited English skills, or come from ethnically diverse cultural backgrounds. Teacher demographics, however, are not changing with the pace of changes in student demographics; and "new teachers will be asked to teach [students with] backgrounds and life experiences very different from their own" (Zeichner, 1993, p. 1). In light of this situation, researchers probed the strategies identified by schools and districts to support beginning teachers in classrooms with high diversity and also performed initial analysis of case study schools with diverse student population and teacher retention patterns.

Supporting Beginning Teachers in Classrooms with High Diversity

While several interview respondents prioritized the need to prepare teachers for the unique needs and learning styles of all students and recognized the demographic gaps between teachers and their students, none of the three districts provides explicit support through mentoring in addressing the needs of diverse students.

In Mid-City ISD, for example, respondents at many levels confirmed the awareness of cultural diversity in the district and the need for inclusive teaching practice. Materials provided to beginning teachers during the initial orientation to the district explicitly state this understanding and cultural awareness is discussed during one of the training sessions. Further development of cultural awareness for teachers, however, is not pursued through other established structures, mentoring or otherwise.

Urban and County Wide ISDs similarly have an understanding of the challenges of teaching diverse learners, but explicit activities that support the development of new teachers to meet these challenges appear to be rare. One school addresses the needs of

diverse learners by screening carefully during the hiring process for teachers who already demonstrate a level of competency in teaching students of varied backgrounds.

The situation encountered during case site visits regarding the support of new teachers in classrooms of highly diverse students echoes the assessment of the current status of educating teachers for cultural diversity made by Zeichner (1993). He observes:

> attention to the problem of preparing teachers to teach a diverse student body is not a new concern [however] there has been relatively very little attention…to ideas about *how* to prepare teachers to teach an increasingly diverse student population more effectively (p. 2, emphasis added).

Teacher Mentoring and Retention in Schools with Diverse Student Populations

As presented above, no mentoring activities were identified through this research that focus on the support of new teachers in classrooms with high diversity. Research findings did, however, provide compelling information regarding the patterns of retention of teachers in diverse and low-performing schools. Data analysis of schools in the three case study sites show the following trends:

- Across all districts, first-year teachers were more likely to be assigned to highly diverse and lower-achieving schools
- District teacher attrition rates were notably higher for diverse and lower-performing schools.

These findings suggest that beginning teachers are indeed facing difficult challenges in the classroom and are "at-risk" of leaving their assignments when placed in highly diverse classrooms without support from more experienced colleagues. While data are not available to further develop these findings, they signal the need for further attention and study to the needs of beginning teachers in teaching diverse students. By identifying "pockets" of greatest need for mentoring intervention, better decisions can be made about how to allocate the limited resources available for mentoring support.

Implications and Recommendations

A recurring thread that undercuts the findings from this research is that there is no "single best way" to organize the mentoring process. Effective mentoring must be flexible and responsive to individual, school, and district needs. There are important roles for state, district, and campus-level administrators; for mentors and beginning teachers; and for related entities such as regional education service centers and higher education in fostering good mentoring in Texas. A number of common principles for achieving success in this endeavor are evident and are presented below in the form of implications and recommendations.

Implications

First, it is apparent that mentoring is only one of many factors associated with the retention of beginning teachers. Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners must consider the range of conditions that undermine teacher stability (e.g., salary, professional status, equitable work assignments, job satisfaction), as well as the other economic and social factors that impact individuals' career choices.

Second, we suggest that the goal of teacher mentoring should be focused on improving teacher quality and improving student success. Retention is a higher profile goal, especially during this time of teacher shortages. A focus on retention alone, however, may compromise quality teaching by retaining teachers who might be more appropriately counseled out of the profession.

Third, mentoring of beginning teachers should be considered one piece of a larger focus on teacher development. Thoughtful reflection on practices by mentor and protégé, school and district administrator, and teacher preparation entities, contribute to the development and continuous improvement of all teachers.

Recommendations

1. It is likely that retention and quality goals associated with beginning teacher mentoring cannot be met by schools and districts alone. In particular, successful mentoring programs may require resources beyond those presently available to most districts. Were states to provide tangible assistance to districts and schools through financial support, mentor training opportunities, technical assistance, and necessary materials and equipment, more would be learned about the true potential of teacher mentoring.

2. Policymakers and district and school administrators should make available another critical resource in teacher mentoring that is currently in short supply: time. Mentors, administrators, others who are part of the educator support system, and beginning teachers all must be afforded the time to devote to effective mentoring and induction.

3. Mentoring programs rely on the availability of well-qualified, veteran teachers to serve as mentors. Evidence from this study shows that in many at-risk schools, about half of the teaching force will probably be inexperienced. State and local planners must determine how to ensure that these schools, in particular, have adequate human resources to support high-quality mentoring for their beginning teachers.

4. The preparation of mentors and development of their capacity to mentor effectively are issues that require attention. Some school districts are able to provide some training, but others need assistance in training their mentors. Support, guidance, and resources should be prioritized for mentor training.

5. An array of support strategies for beginning teachers should be available for use in a teacher mentoring program. For example, reciprocal classroom observations;

model teaching; team teaching; collaborative curriculum development; and teaming all offer important vehicles and techniques to develop the knowledge and skills of new teachers.

6. Finally, effective mentoring is more than a one-on-one relationship between mentor and protégé. New teachers benefit from the support of other teachers, administrators, and higher education partners. Teacher mentoring is best developed within a professional culture that favors collegiality and collaboration.

Areas for Future Research

This research effort represents a step towards better understanding beginning teacher mentoring. While questions remain regarding many aspects of mentoring in Texas and implications for other states, researchers identified three issues in particular that merit future research.

First, there is a need to collect information about how time is created for mentoring, whether it be in the form of release time or creative scheduling. How much time is needed and how structured should it be? This single element of "time" is likely to be a critical determining factor of program success.

Second, are questions of how to create an appropriate relationship between mentoring and evaluation. Most pressing is the question of whether mentors of new teachers can, or should, also be their evaluators. Constructive criticism is certainly appropriate in mentoring, but if mentors are perceived as evaluators, they can be intimidating to vulnerable novice teachers. The dynamics of evaluation and mentoring and ways to avoid negative results should be further studied. Also, there is a need for more sophisticated program evaluation at all levels including individual campuses, districts, and the state. Since mentoring activities vary so greatly at the individual campus level, efforts should be made to investigate the correlation between mentoring support and retention at this level. When this relationship is better understood it will become more feasible to weigh the costs and benefits of teacher mentoring.

Finally, a number of questions must be addressed regarding teaching diverse student populations. First, how do districts make decisions regarding beginning teacher assignments and what are statewide trends regarding placements of new teachers in highly diverse and low-performing schools? Second, what are the key reasons for high attrition in diverse or low-performing schools; and third, how might mentoring support relieve the pressures faced by new teachers in diverse classrooms? Answers to these questions can help policymakers make policy and resource allocation decisions in order to direct attention to the most critical areas of need.

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Appendices

A: Survey Instrument

B: Annotated Bibliography

Teacher Mentoring Research Project

Survey of Texas School Districts

If you are willing to share available written information about your district's policies and mentoring activities, please send a copy of the following documents along with your completed survey:

- **School district policy that addresses mentoring for beginning teachers**
- **Description of your district's mentoring activities, including a description of any assessment of beginning teachers that is part of those mentoring activities**

THANK YOU

Q1. Teacher attrition due to beginning teachers leaving the profession or transferring to other districts can affect school districts in many ways. Which of the following effects has your district experienced? (circle **all** that apply)

a. An overall teacher shortage in the district
b. Teacher shortage in certain grade levels, content areas, or specializations
c. Negative effects on students or faculty
d. An increase in teacher recruitment costs
e. An increase in teacher training costs
f. Other, please describe: _____
g. Attrition of beginning teachers is not a major concern to this district.
h. Unsure

Q2. When did your district begin providing mentoring support to beginning teachers?

a. Month _____ Year _____
b. Mentoring support is not currently provided to beginning teachers.
c. Unsure

Q3. Which of the following motivations are currently prompting your district to provide mentoring support to beginning teachers? (circle up to **three** most important motivations)

a. Teacher requests for mentoring activities
b. Campus requests for mentoring activities
c. Teacher preparation program request for mentoring activities
d. Desire to increase student achievement through mentoring beginning teachers
e. Need to improve retention of beginning teachers
f. Need to attract new staff to the district
g. Need to improve skills and knowledge of beginning teachers
h. Desire to build collegial culture among teachers
i. Compliance with state policy
j. Response to research results showing benefits of mentoring
k. Other, please explain:
l. Mentoring support is not currently provided to beginning teachers.

Q4. Which of the following choices best describes the changes in your mentoring activities for beginning teachers since 1990? (circle **one**)

a. No significant changes
b. Increase in mentoring activities
c. Decrease in mentoring activities
d. Periods of both increase and decrease of mentoring activities
e. Unsure

Q5. What have been the major barriers to providing mentoring support to beginning teachers in your district? (circle **all** that apply)

a. Experienced teachers are unwilling to volunteer to serve as mentors.
b. Experienced teachers do not have the time to serve as mentors.
c. District and campus administrators do not have the time to oversee mentoring activities.
d. Training for mentors is scarce or not available.
e. Stipends for mentors are scarce or not available.
f. Resources or materials for mentoring activities are scarce or not available.
g. District and/or campuses have limited expertise in planning or operating a mentoring program.
h. Beginning teachers are not interested in receiving mentoring support.
i. State guidance or assistance for mentoring is not sufficient.
j. Other, please describe: _____
k. We have not experienced major barriers.
l. Unsure

Q6. How would you describe the current role of the district administration in beginning teacher mentoring activities? (circle **all** that apply)

a. Determines district policy and communicates policy to school campuses
b. Oversees and monitors teacher mentoring activities
c. Provides technical assistance regarding mentoring activities
d. Provides training to mentors
e. Provides other resources (e.g. financial, staff) for mentoring activities
f. Selects mentors
g. Assigns beginning teachers a mentor
h. Plans mentoring activities at the campus level
i. Plans mentoring activities at the district level
j. Other, please explain:
k. District administration is not involved in beginning teacher mentoring activities.
l. Unsure

Q7. Who has primary responsibility for ensuring that mentoring activities are provided to beginning teachers? (circle **one**)

a. District administration
b. Campus administration
c. Faculty in individual campus departments or grade levels
d. Faculty of a teacher preparation program (college or university)
e. Other, specify:
f. Mentoring support is not currently provided to beginning teachers.

Q8. Which of the following best describes the current mentoring activities in your district? (circle **one**)

a. Formal mentoring program planned and operated by district office staff
b. Informal district-wide mentoring activities, planned and operated by district and/or campus staff
c. Formal campus-based program planned and operated by individual campus administration
d. Informal campus-based activities planned and operated by individual campus administration
e. Formal campus-based program planned and operated by individual departments or grade levels
f. Informal campus-based activities planned and operated by individual departments or grade levels
g. Mentoring support is not currently provided to beginning teachers.
h. Unsure

Q9. How much training do mentors receive? (circle **one**)

a. Ongoing during the first year as a mentor
b. Ongoing during the first semester as a mentor
c. More than two weeks
d. One to two weeks
e. One day to one week
f. Less than one day
g. Mentor training is currently not provided.
h. Unsure

Q10. Who trains mentors in your district? (circle **all** that apply)

a. District personnel
b. Campus personnel
c. Experienced mentors in the district
d. Representative from a teacher preparation program
e. Representative from an Education Service Center
f. Other outside trainer, please specify:_____
g. Mentor training is currently not provided.
h. Unsure

Q11. What resources are used to operate mentoring activities for beginning teachers in your district? (circle **all** that apply)

a. Mentor incentive or stipend
b. Beginning teacher incentive or stipend
c. Materials or equipment
d. Training for mentors
e. Administrative staff time
f. Beginning teachers' time
g. Mentors' time
h. Substitute teacher wages
i. Other, describe:_____
j. No resources are used to operate mentoring activities.
k. Unsure

Q12. Which of the following entities provide funds specifically for mentoring activities in your district? (circle **all** that apply)

a. Federal government
b. State government
c. Teacher preparation program(s)
d. Education Service Center(s)
e. Professional association or organization (e.g. teacher association)
f. Private resources (e.g. parent groups, businesses, foundations, donations)
g. Other, specify: _____
h. No funds are provided or earmarked for mentoring activities.
i. Unsure

Q13. Which of the following entities provide **non**-financial support (such as training, technical assistance, staffing, assessment) for mentoring activities in your district? (circle **all** that apply)

a. State government
b. Teacher preparation program(s)
c. Education Service Center(s)
d. Professional association or organization (e.g. teacher association)
e. Other Texas school districts
f. Other, specify: _____
g. No non-financial support is provided from outside the district.
h. Unsure

Q14. Are beginning teachers assessed (e.g. through observations; review of journals, portfolios or lesson plans) **as part of your mentoring activities**?

a. Yes b. No c. Unsure

Q15. What have been the most important results of mentoring support for beginning teachers in your district? (circle up to **three** most important results)

a. Increased retention of beginning teachers
b. Improved skills and knowledge of beginning teachers
c. Increased job satisfaction among beginning teachers
d. Increased student achievement
e. Improved campus work environments
f. Improved relationship between district and teacher preparation program(s)
g. Other, please explain: _____
h. We have not identified results associated with mentoring activities.
i. Unsure

Q16. How successful do you think current mentoring activities in your district are for **retaining beginning teachers**? (circle **one**)

a. Very successful b. Fairly successful c. Not very successful d. Not at all successful

Q17. How successful do you think current mentoring activities in your district are for **improving the quality of beginning teachers**? (circle **one**)

a. Very successful b. Fairly successful c. Not very successful d. Not at all successful

Q18. Which of the following choices best describes your assessment of the mentoring support that is currently provided to beginning teachers in your district? (circle **one**)

a. Contains a broad range of activities and positively affects all beginning teachers
b. Is well established but might benefit from minor improvement or additions
c. Is a relatively new program and seems to be improving
d. Is just beginning and still has many areas to be improved
e. Has not developed beyond the planning stages and will take time to implement effectively
f. Other, describe: _____

Q19. Which of the following supports would help improve the mentoring activities in your district? (circle up to **three** most important supports)

a. Financial support for mentors, beginning teachers, or program staff
b. Technical assistance for planning and implementing mentoring activities
c. Training for mentors
d. Materials or equipment (e.g. manuals, forms, training supplies/equipment, etc.)
e. Participation of local teacher preparation program(s)
f. State guidance on how to plan and implement mentoring activities
g. Advice or assistance from other school districts with successful programs
h. Assessment of beginning teachers
i. Evaluation of the effectiveness of mentoring activities
j. Other, specify: _____
k. No supports are needed
l. Unsure

If you would like to share any additional comments about mentoring for beginning teachers and/or effective practices in your district, please use the back of this survey or attach a separate sheet.

All survey responses will be kept completely confidential and will not be shared by researchers with any other individual or agency. You may return your completed survey without any identifying information if you wish. However, the information requested below will help us in case we need to contact you to clarify your responses. It will also be used to identify a winner of the lottery for $100.00 towards the purchase of district materials.

Name _____ District Name _____

Title _____ Address _____

Telephone _____ City, State, Zip _____

If you would like to receive a summary of the results of SEDL's study on teacher mentoring in Texas, and you have provided contact information above, check the box below. You may also request a copy of the summary by contacting Diane Pan, SEDL, 211 East 7th St., Austin, TX, 78701, (512) 476-6861 x212, dpan@sedl.org.

☐ **Yes, send me a summary of teacher mentoring research results.**

Thank you for helping us understand the needs and successes of teacher mentoring in Texas schools.

Annotated Bibliography

Bullard, C. (1998). Qualified teachers for all California students: Current issues in recruitment, retention, preparation, and professional development. Sacramento, California Research Bureau, California State Library.

This paper reviews prior research and writing in four areas: teacher recruitment, retention, preparation, and professional development. The author highlights common themes from the literature in these areas and considers policy options.

Croasmun, J., D. Hampton, et al. (1997). Teacher attrition: Is time running out?, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

This article presents the teacher attrition problem and discusses a number of forces and situations that seem to affect attrition rates, including: salaries, level of education, marital status, tenure, beginning teachers, special education. The article discusses the implications of attrition for the future of public education. The authors also review a number of policy responses to attrition: mentor programs, corporate support, technology, money, recruitment, and alternative certification. Final recommendations by the authors focus on the importance of teacher preparation and support of beginning teachers.

Danin, R. and M. A. Bacon (1999). What teachers like (and don't like) about mandated induction programs. A better beginning: Supporting and mentoring new teachers. M. Scherer. Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This article presents results from a study in Colorado that examined how provisionally licensed teachers perceived the state-mandated induction program in their district. Findings indicate that teachers greatly benefited from experiences that helped them adapt to school culture, and from the support of a mentor and administrator.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). "Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence." Education Policy Analysis Archives 8(1): 28.

The study examines the ways in which teacher qualifications and other school inputs are related to student achievement across states. Quantitative studies indicate that measures of teacher preparation and certification are the strongest correlates of student achievement in reading and mathematics. The author examines policies that influence the level of teacher qualifications and explores the implications of these findings for state policy on teacher education, licensing, hiring, and professional development.

Donaldson, M. L. and B. Poon, Eds. (1999). Reflections of first-year teachers on school culture: Questions, hopes, and challenges. New Directions for School Leadership. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

This book contains eight articles that present the experiences of beginning teachers through personal reflection, presentation of individual cases, and analysis of challenges and supports.

Doston, G. A. (1995). Mentoring across culture in teacher education: A cross-cultural perspective for retaining minority students in teacher education. Recruitment and Retention of Minorities in Education, New York, School of Education, State University of New York at Oswego.

This paper briefly discusses issues relevant to cross-cultural mentoring, that is, when mentor and protege are of different cultural backgrounds. Potential problems, needs of minority proteges, and suggestions for both mentor and protege to foster a successful relationship are presented.

Feiman-Nemser, S., C. Carver, et al., Eds. (1999). Beyond support: Taking new teachers seriously as learners. A better beginning: Supporting and mentoring new teachers. M. Scherer. Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This article reviews three elements of a comprehensive system of beginning-teacher induction: support, development, and assessment. The presence of and linkages among these three elements help to improve skills of beginning teachers and encourage continual learning as those teachers continue on in the profession.

Feiman-Nemser, S. and M. B. Parker (1992). Los Angeles mentors: Local guides or educational companions?, National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, College of Education, Michigan State University:

This report analyzes the Teacher Trainee program and the Mentor Teacher program in California. The Teacher Trainee program allows college graduates without a teaching certificate to be hired at schools, and the Mentor Teacher program constitutes the support system for these teachers. The authors conducted research to gain the perspectives of mentor teachers about their experiences.

Fiedeler, E. E. and Haselkorn, D. (1999). Learning the ropes: Urban teacher induction programs and practices in the United States. Boston: Recruiting New Teachers.

This work provides an extensive overview of teacher induction programs in urban contexts across the United States. The recent history of teacher induction is provided, along with a discussion of mentoring as key to educational practice. A

survey of teacher induction programs across the states is complemented by an in-depth study of ten of the urban programs. Recommendations are offered for subsequent study and practice.

Genzuk, M., M. Lavadenz, et al. (1994). Para-educators: A source for remedying the shortage of teachers for limited English-proficient students. The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Students.

This paper estimates the number of students in need of bilingual education and discusses the demand and supply of bilingual teachers. The authors propose the idea of helping bilingual teacher assistants become credentialed teachers and presents potential barriers to this strategy.

Gewertz, C. (2000). Demographic challenges ahead for schools, study warns. Education Week.

This article reports on a new study that analyzes projected demographic trends for the next decade that will affect schools. The report is called "Secondary Schools in a New Millennium" and a summary of it is available at www.nassp.org.

Haggstrom, G. W., L. Darling-Hammond, et al. (1988). Assessing teacher supply and demand. Santa Monica, The RAND Corporation.

This report was used to establish data requirements for the Schools and Staffing Survey administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The authors present an analysis of factors that affect the supply of and demand for elementary and secondary school teachers. It describes and justifies a data-collection system for assessing teacher supply and demand. Teacher supply, demand, shortages, and projections are discussed in terms of data indicators.

Hare, D., J. Nathan, et al. (2000). Teacher shortages in the Midwest: Current trends and future issues. Oak Brook, IL, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

This report contains a discussion of teacher supply and demand in the Midwestern states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin). The report seeks to address questions regarding how teacher shortage is affecting the region and how to increase the supply (especially in key shortage areas). The authors also reflect on the quality and availability of state-level data.

Heidkamp, A. and J. Shapiro (1999). The elements of a supportive induction program. A better beginning: Supporting and mentoring new teachers. M. Scherer. Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This article provides tips for educators who want to build their own strong, school-based induction program.

Huling-Austin, L. (1992). "Research on learning to teach: Implications for teacher induction and mentoring programs." Journal of Teacher Education 43(3): 173-180.

This article presents results of research on learning to teach and connects these findings to teacher induction and mentoring. Information was gained for this report through the identification and review of previous research on learning to teach. Linkages between knowledge on learning to teach and implications for teacher induction and mentoring focus on four major areas: first-year teacher placement and assignment, teacher induction programs, preparation of mentor teachers, and expectations related to novice teachers.

Ingersoll, R. M. (1999). Teacher turnover, teacher shortages, and the organization of schools. Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington.

The paper reports results of analysis of data from the Schools and Staffing Survey and its supplement, the Teacher Followup Survey, conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Findings indicate that school organizational conditions are important factors that affect teacher retention.

Irvine, J. J., Ed. (1997). Critical knowledge for diverse teachers and learners. Washington, D. C., American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

This book contains a collection of articles on teacher preparation and development, teacher practice, and needs of diverse learners. Articles specifically treat preparation of teachers in preservice; perspectives of practicing teachers; teaching from the perspective of Latinas, African Americans, and Asian/Pacific Americans; and perspectives from the standards movement.

Johnston, R. C. and D. Viadero (2000). Unmet promise: Raising minority achievement. Education Week.

This article reports that current trends indicate student race/ethnic characteristics will be predictors for school success. This achievement gap is present in current analyses of performance among different race/ethnic groups and is expected to grow as the nation's minority populations grow.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). "Fighting for our lives: Preparing teachers to teach African American students." Journal of Teacher Education 51(3): 206-214.

This article discusses the challenges that teacher preparation programs face in assisting teachers in better meeting the needs of African American students. The author discusses the unique African American cultural experience. She also presents teaching strategies for helping prepare teachers of African American students.

Lewis, M. S. (1999). Supply and demand of teachers of color. The Educational Resources Information Center Digests and Publications.

This report shows the increase of demand for teachers of color based on student enrollment patterns. It also looks at the decrease in the number of teachers of color and briefly discusses recruitment practices that might help fill the gap.

Meier, D. (1995). The power of their ideas: Lessons for America from a small school in Harlem. Boston, Beacon Press.

A book that presents an urban educator's perspective and advice on how to create innovative public schools that ensure a personal, respectful, and excellent education for all students. Based on the experiences of Central Park East schools in East Harlem, New York.

Montgomery Halford, J. (1999). Easing the way for new teachers. A better beginning: Supporting and mentoring new teachers. M. Scherer. Alexandria, VA, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This article describes how schools should use mentoring to help their new teachers thrive in the classroom.

National Center for Research on Teacher Learning (1993). Findings on learning to teach. East Lansing, MI, National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, College of Education, Michigan State University.

A short summary of findings from research on the teacher preparation process. Myths about teacher preparation are debunked and explored in six areas: content knowledge, information about diverse cultural groups, mentoring and classroom performance, alternative certification, teacher education program structures, and short-term inservice workshops.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1997). Doing what matters most: Investing in quality teaching. New York, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

A follow-up to the previous year's report, this document revisits the Commission's recommendations, offers new data about how investments in teaching influence student achievement, and provides an overview of the nation's progress toward quality teaching.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996). What matters most: Teaching for America's future. New York, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

This report provides an update on the status of teaching in the United States, including a discussion of common myths about teaching and the challenges teachers face. NCTAF offers five recommendations for policy action: 1) get serious about standards for students and teachers, 2) reinvent teacher preparation and professional development, 3) improve teacher recruitment and put qualified teachers in every classroom, 4) encourage and reward teacher knowledge and skill, and 5) create schools that are organized for student and teacher success.

National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (1999). Creating a teacher mentoring program.

This document outlines some issues and questions that practitioners should consider when developing mentor programs. The authors emphasize the importance of collaboration, time for mentoring, confidentiality, and teacher placement. They also outline steps for selecting, training, and supporting mentors; the specific types of support that proteges need from mentors; and how to measure program effectiveness.

Norlander-Case, K. A., T. G. Reagan, et al. (1991). The professional teacher: The preparation and nurturance of the reflective practitioner. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

This book establishes a conception of career professions in democratic society and reflects on the future of the teaching profession if it were built on moral and ethical responsibility. This future vision must be supported by inquiry and reflection within the education community, cohesive educator preparation programs, and educative communities and professional development centers. The authors also emphasize the need to prepare educators with a philosophical grounding in equity and diversity. Finally, the book discusses the kinds of resistance that keep the teaching profession from changing and also presents the stories of four educators as examples of the moral dimensions of the teaching profession.

Odell, S. J. and Huling, L. (2000). Quality mentoring for novice teachers. Indianapolis, IN: Kappa Delta Pi.

This book proposes a framework for quality mentoring and describes operational practices within each of six framework dimensions. The purpose of the framework is to guide, assess, and develop more fully mentoring as a professional practice. The book maps out how to improve the mentoring process in the initial preparation of teachers, identifying strategies for enhancing the culture of schools for new teachers and presenting vignettes that offer viable methods to prepare experienced teachers for mentoring. The book is a collaborative endeavor of Kappa Delta Pi and the Association of Teacher Educators.

Panel on Novice Teacher Induction Support System (1998). Final report. Austin, Texas State Board for Educator Certification.

This report provides evidence of the need for a supported teacher induction program in Texas. It reviews the need for mentoring new teachers, the history of previous induction efforts, and a recommended plan for the state.

Reiman, A. J. and Thies-Sprinthall, L. (1998). Mentoring and supervision for teacher development. New York: Longman.

This book summarizes the current literature related to teacher supervision and mentoring practices. It synthesizes the fields of instructional supervision, adult development, teacher education and mentoring, and ongoing professional development. Supervision, as used in this text, refers to a school-based or school/college-based activity that improves instruction through guided assistance and discourse between adults.

Rutherford, W. L. and S. M. Hord (2000). Urban initiative: Status of teaching. A study of the San Antonio Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas. Austin, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

This report documents results of research that attempted to ascertain the degree to which a large urban district exemplified recommendations established by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Findings are intended to guide the learning and professional development of teachers. The data presented include state policy on Texas teacher preparation and certification, the status of teachers in Texas, the status of teaching in San Antonio Independent School District (recruitment, certification, compensation, attrition, standards), a review of student performance in SAISD, and results of research on the teacher mentoring program in SAISD. An executive summary accompanies the full report.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (1994). Teaching for diversity. Austin, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

These proceedings summarize activities at SEDL's 1994 Regional Policy Networkshop. At this conference, Ana Maria Villegas discussed demographic trends, preparing teachers for diversity, increasing the pool of teachers of color, and policy considerations. Villegas also outlined models and strategies for improving the recruitment, preparation, and credentialing of teachers. Jacqueline Jordan Irvine presented the need to restructure teacher education and offered ten essential components for restructuring for diversity.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (1994). Teaching for diversity: An update on state activities. Austin, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory:

This report provides an update of state-level activities related to teacher preparation, recruitment, and credentialing in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. It also presents strategies these states are using to address diversity in teacher education.

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2000). Wanted: Teachers, teachers, and more teachers. 2000 Regional Policy Networkshop. Austin, TX. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

These proceedings summarize activities at SEDL's 2000 Regional Policy Networkshop. Panels on teacher shortage in the Southwestern Region, alternative certification, and teacher mentoring are highlighted.

SRI International. (2000). Preparing and supporting new teachers: A literature review. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

This document is a review of what is known about a series of efforts to improve the teacher workforce. It includes a discussion of teacher preparation, a review of initial certification and alternative certification policies, and an examination of the literature on induction support for new teachers. The review describes the extent and nature of relevant reform initiatives, their defining characteristics, and what is known about their impacts. Major methodological issues are discussed and questions for further research are raised.

Sweeny, B. (n.d.) What's Happening in Mentoring and Induction in Each of the United States? http://www.teachermentors.com/mcenter%20site/statelist.html

A table containing a list of states in the U.S. that have mentoring programs. Web links to more detailed text are also provided when available. Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas are all included in the table.

Sweeny, B. (1994). A new teacher mentoring knowledge base of best practices: A summary of lessons learned from practitioners.

This summary briefly reviews important issue to consider when setting up a mentoring program. Nine areas are presented: basic assumptions, purpose of mentoring, mentor roles and tasks, selection of mentors, matching mentors and proteges, expectations for mentors and proteges, training, support for mentoring, and context for mentoring.

Texas Center for Educational Research (1999). Texas Teacher Recruitment and Retention Study.

This summary reviews the teacher shortage problem in Texas and provides an overview of the ways in which schools and other entities have responded to the alleviate the shortage. The summary also discusses teacher retention, presenting

statistics and examples of collaborative retention efforts. A list of recommendations are made for statewide efforts to improve and expand teacher recruitment and retention programs.

Texas Education Agency (1994). Texas teacher diversity and recruitment. Austin, Texas Education Agency Office of Policy Planning and Evaluation.

This report provides an examination of student enrollment and the ethnic and gender distribution of teachers. Current data analysis is presented as well as an historical look at minority participation in the teacher pipeline.

Texas Education Agency (2000). Snapshot '99: 1998-99 School District Profiles. Texas Education Agency.

Snapshot is a Texas Education Agency publication that provides general information about the characteristics of public school districts in Texas. Published since 1987-88, Snapshot presents a wide variety of information in a consistent format from year to year. Topics include a variety of demographic information about students and staff, as well as financial information about school district budgets, property values, and state financial assistance. Items showing student performance on state administered assessment instruments and college admission tests are also included. The publication examines statewide data, including historical trends, and provides data for each school district and for selected groupings of districts. Other summarized data such as the Education Service Center region statistics are also provided.

Texas Education Agency Policy Analysis and Evaluation Division (1995). Texas teacher retention, mobility, and attrition. Austin, Texas Education Agency:

This report focuses on issues related to teacher supply including retention, mobility, and attrition. Data available on Texas schools is used to identify historical trends, teacher characteristics, school conditions, and induction and retention of teachers.

U.S. Department of Education (1998). Promising practices: New ways to improve teacher quality. Washington D. C., U.S. Department of Education.

This report provides overviews of state programs that support quality teaching. Six types of programs are featured: recruitment, teacher preparation, licensing and certification, induction of beginning teachers, professional development, and teacher accountability and incentives. Three induction programs are described. First is Delaware's Mentoring Program that links mentoring for all beginning teachers to professional teaching standards. Second is the Peer Assistance and Review Program in Columbus, Ohio that combines an intern program for newly hired teachers and an intervention program for experienced teachers who are

having difficulty. Third is the Cadre Project in Omaha, Nebraska, which is a graduate induction program for beginning teachers and a professional renewal program for experienced teachers.

Wicker, J. (1999). Going, going, gone: A handbook of practical responses to the Texas teacher recruitment and retention problem. Austin, Texas Association of School Boards.

This report states that there is a teacher shortage problem in Texas. The state and federal programs that exist to address teacher shortage are reviewed and recruitment strategies are offered. The teacher retention problem is also highlighted with suggested ways to increase retention in Texas schools.

Zeichner, K. M. (1993). Educating teachers for cultural diversity. East Lansing, National Center for Research on Teaching and Learning.

This report addresses the need to help teachers acquire the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to work effectively with a diverse student population. The author presents the context of growing disparity between teachers and students and summarizes the knowledge and strategies that currently exist regarding the issue. Alternative approaches to teacher preparation are presented as ways to address the issues, including biography, attitude change, field experience, cultural knowledge, and instructional strategies. A discussion of the different ways that teachers learn to teach and conclusions end the report.